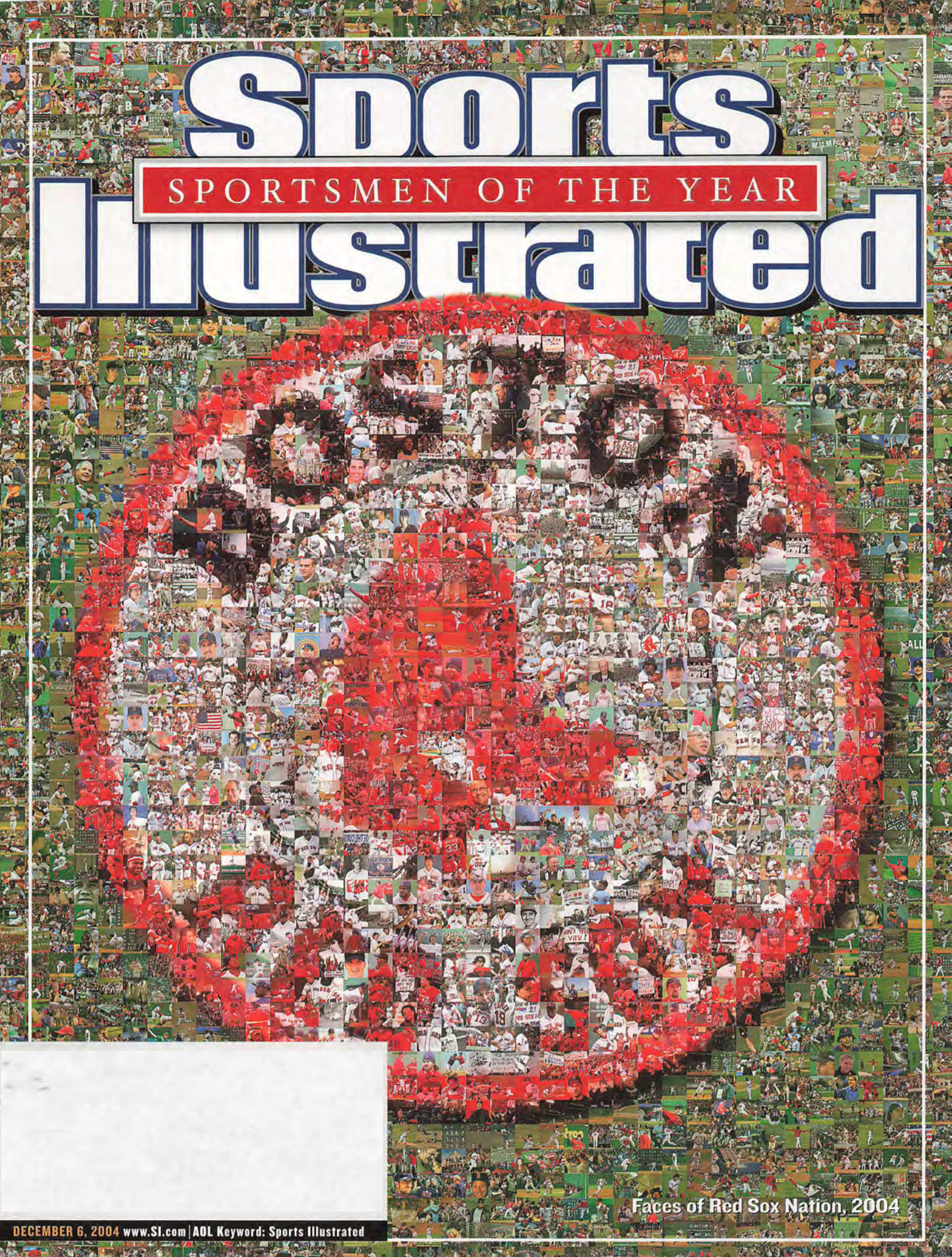
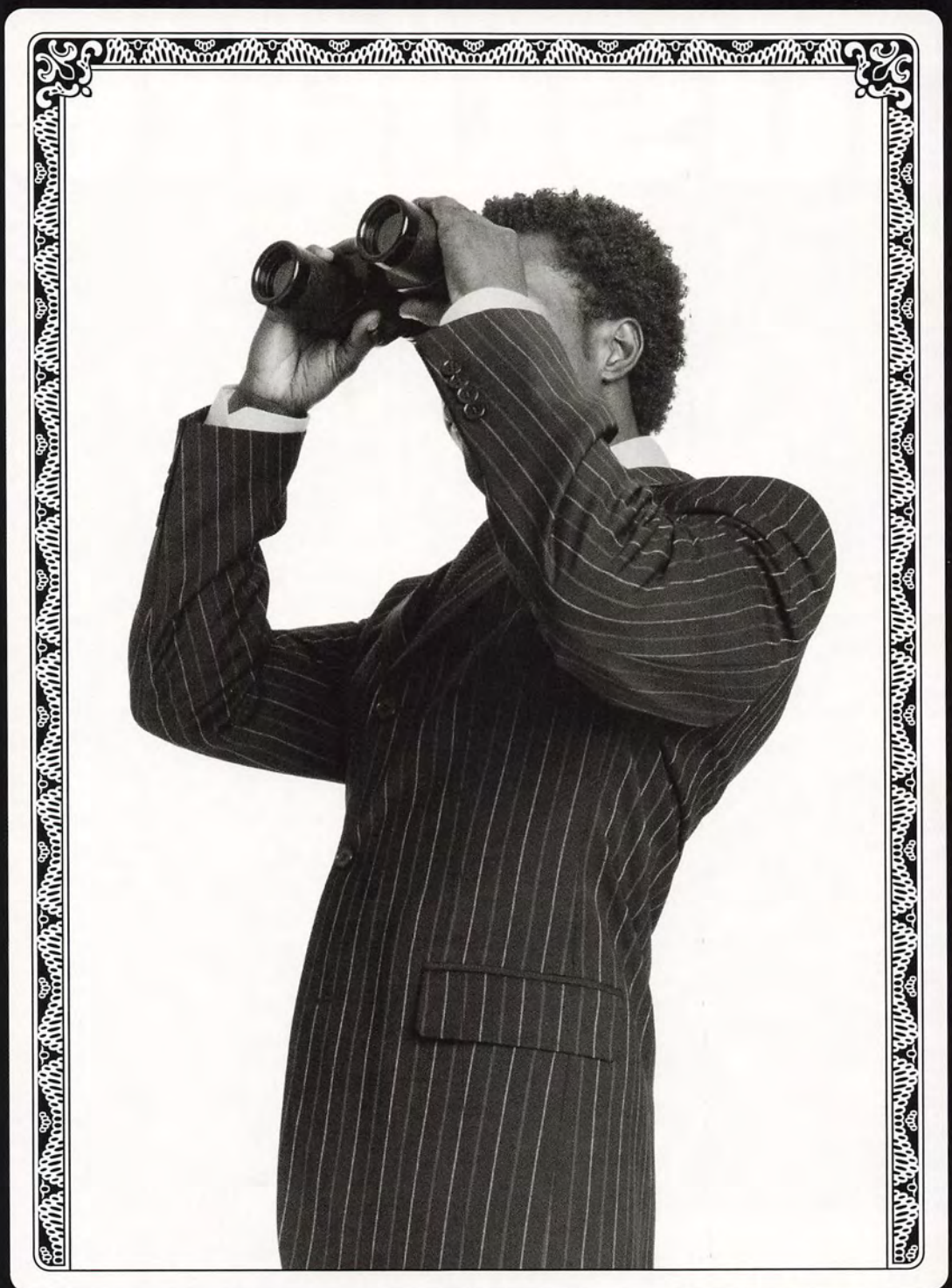
Sports Illustrated

SPORTSMEN OF THE YEAR



Faces of Red Sox Nation, 2004

DECEMBER 6, 2004 www.SI.com | AOL Keyword: Sports Illustrated



HOW TO

IMPROVE

your

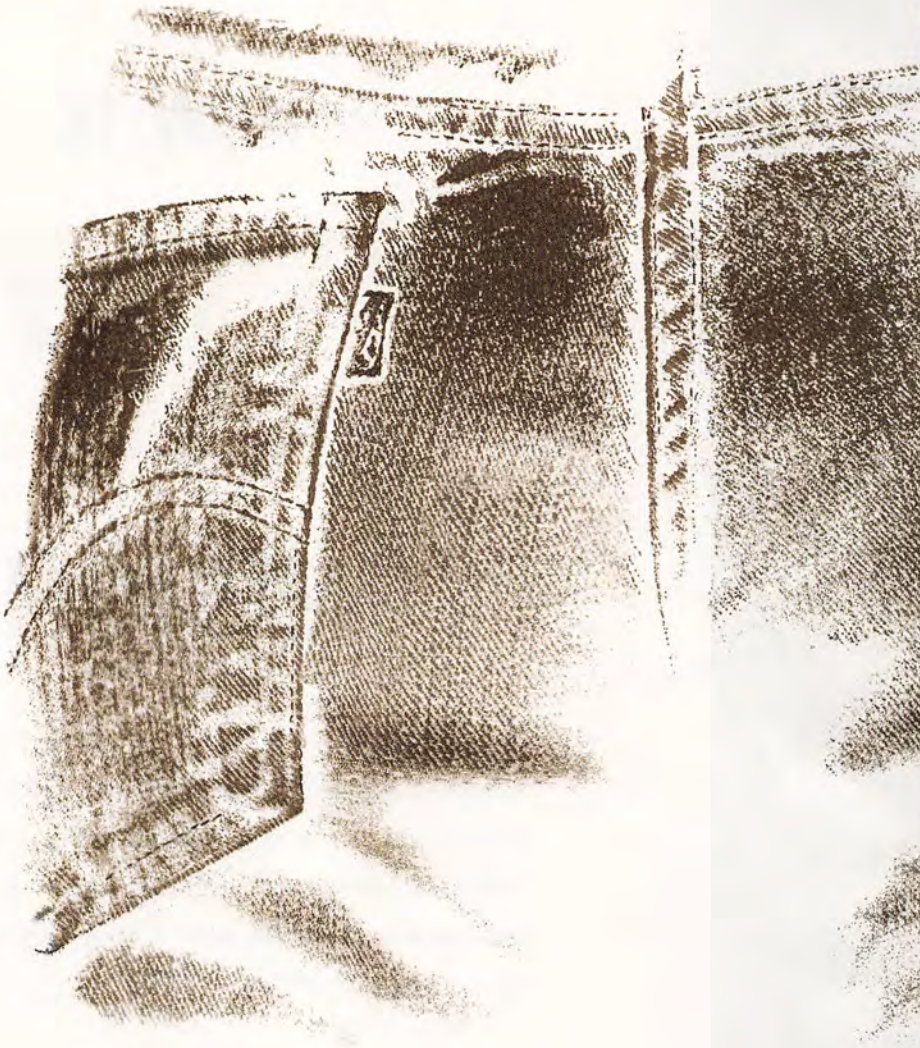
VISION

No laser surgery required here. Just the American Express® Gold Card. It gets you prime seating to many of the most sought-after shows, concerts, and sporting events. You can also get tickets before they go on sale to the general public. To get up close and personal, apply today. Just call 1.800.THE CARD or visit americanexpress.com to learn more.

A WORLD OF SERVICE℠

©2004 American Express Company. Offer only available to Cardmembers with the American Express® Gold Card, Platinum Card®, Centurion® Card, Corporate Platinum Card and the Executive Business Card, Business Gold Card, Business Platinum Card and Business Centurion Card from OPEN: The Small Business Network℠. For a complete listing of all eligible and ineligible Card products, visit us at www.americanexpress.com/gpe or call 800-448-TIKS. Ticket orders may be subject to a service charge. Subject to availability as well as to prior group sales, subscription sales and special ticket holds. Casting, dates and prices subject to change. No refunds or exchanges. Ticket limits may apply. Some Gold Card Events may not be accessible to Cardmembers with disabilities.

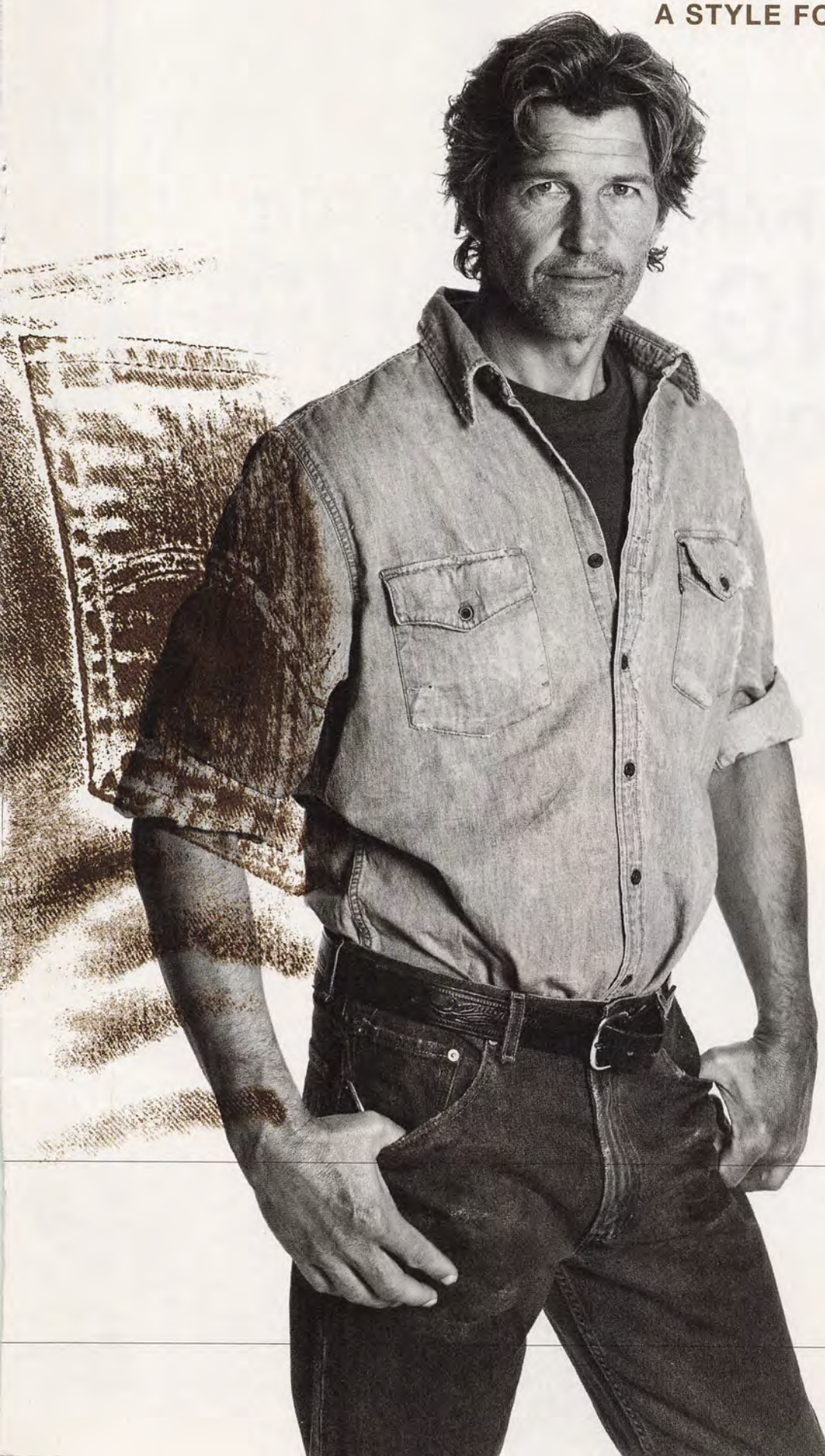
©2004 Levi Strauss & Co. All rights reserved.



NAME: **MATT NORKLUN**
PROFESSION: **AIRCRAFT MECHANIC**
JEANS: **LEVI'S® REGULAR FIT 505® JEANS**
IMPRESSION: **GREASE**

FIND YOUR STYLE AT JCPENNEY AND JCPENNEY.COM levi.com

A STYLE FOR EVERY STORY™



RELAXED FIT

REGULAR FIT

501® ORIGINAL

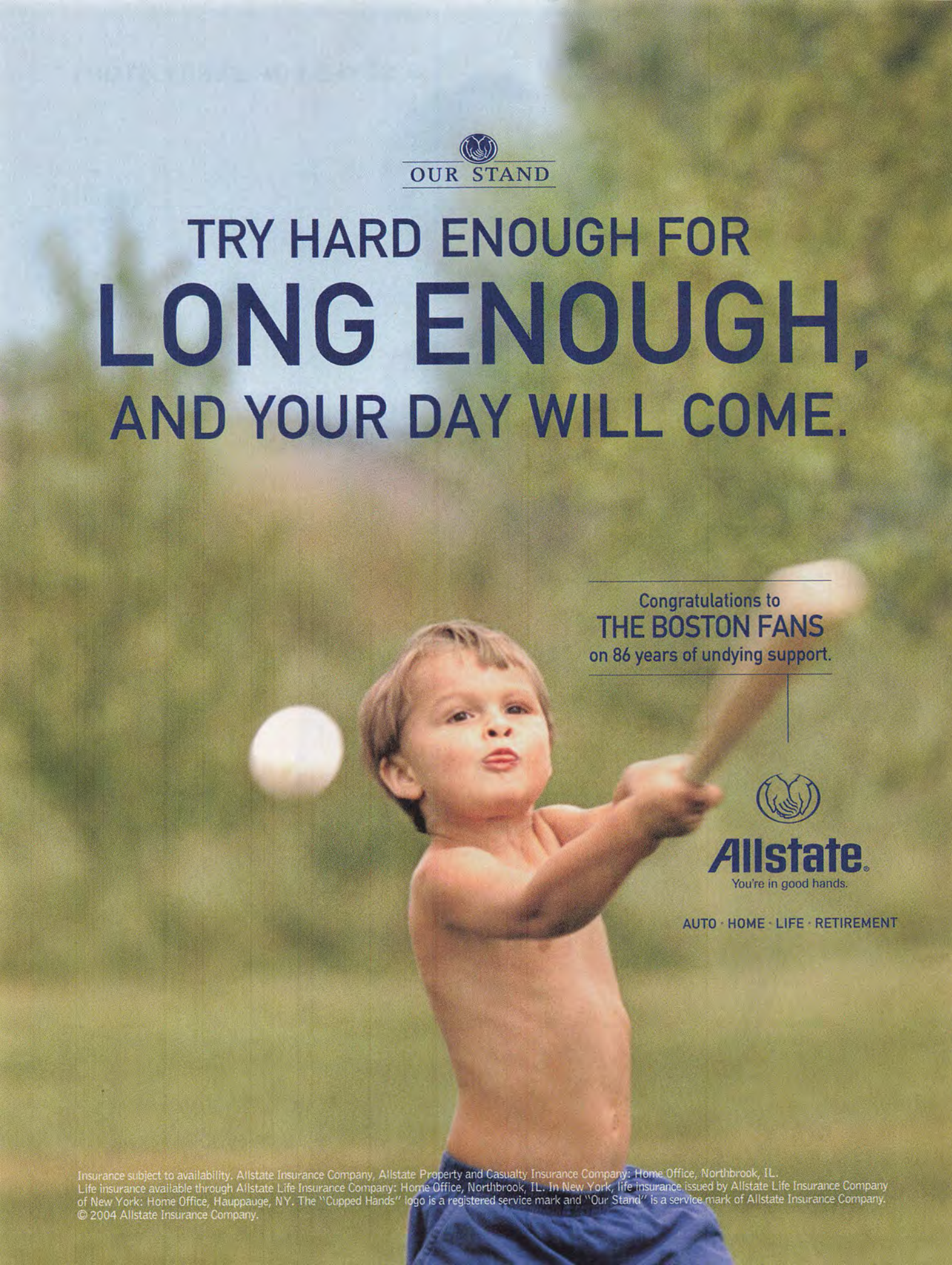
LOOSE STRAIGHT

LOOSE BOOT CUT

LOW RISE STRAIGHT

LOW RISE BOOT CUT

LEVI'S®


OUR STAND
TRY HARD ENOUGH FOR
LONG ENOUGH,
AND YOUR DAY WILL COME.
Congratulations to
THE BOSTON FANS
on 86 years of undying support.
Allstate.
You're in good hands.
AUTO · HOME · LIFE · RETIREMENT
Insurance subject to availability. Allstate Insurance Company, Allstate Property and Casualty Insurance Company: Home Office, Northbrook, IL.
Life insurance available through Allstate Life Insurance Company: Home Office, Northbrook, IL. In New York, life insurance issued by Allstate Life Insurance Company of New York: Home Office, Hauppauge, NY. The "Cupped Hands" logo is a registered service mark and "Our Stand" is a service mark of Allstate Insurance Company.
© 2004 Allstate Insurance Company.

Sports Illustrated
DECEMBER 6, 2004
VOLUME 101, NO. 22

The Lineup

1918 team sweater and ball

50 SPORTSMEN OF THE YEAR

The 2004 Boston Red Sox staged the most improbable comeback in baseball history and liberated their long-suffering nation of fans
by Tom Verducci

COLLEGE FOOTBALL
70 Call It the Twiceman
Three top teams have two bona fide Heisman candidates
by Austin Murphy

PRO BASKETBALL
78 Soaring to Old Heights
After five ankle operations, Grant Hill is dazzling again
by Chris Ballard

PRO FOOTBALL
86 Down in the Dumps
It's been a long fall from the top for the Dolphins and 49ers
by Michael Silver

COLLEGE BASKETBALL
90 Ahead of Schedule
NBA scouts love 7-foot high school junior Greg Oden
by Tim Layden

PAINTBALL
96 Whose Idea Was This?
In 1981 some friends settled a beef by shooting paint at one another. Look what came of it
by Charles Gaines

TRACK AND FIELD
116 The Color of Speed
Many fans who can't believe Olympic 400-meter champ Jeremy Wariner is white have argued it out on the Web
by Gary Smith

THANKS A LOT Three days after Thanksgiving, Denver lost to Oakland in a snowstorm (page 144).

Departments

8 Leading Off
18 Letters
20 Contributors
23 Air and Space
Harvard footballers win, graduate and even go pro **by Steve Rushin**
24 Scorecard
- NFL unkind to college coaches
- Bon voyage, Landon Donovan
- NBA brawl's aftermath

36 Faces in the Crowd
39 Players
146 Life of Reilly
Sox, Shmox. My Sportsman pick is Bill Buckner **by Rick Reilly**

Inside . . .

130 The NBA
- Ray Allen leads booming Sonics

133 College Basketball
- Wake's other good guard

135 College Football
- Big-time coaches on the bubble
- Here comes Showdown Saturday

138 Motor Sports
- SI's Driver of the Year: Johnson

141 The NFL
- Moss back in the (end) zone
- Dr. Z likes the Chargers

Cover

PHOTOMOSAIC BY ROBERT SILVERS/ www.photomosaic.com (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SPORTS ILLUSTRATED/AP/GETTY IMAGES)

SI Extra

To sign up for SPORTS ILLUSTRATED's free subscriber-only e-mail newsletter, go to sicustomerservice.com/siextra.

For more on the Red Sox—including Web-exclusive photos and an SI covers gallery—plus a complete Sportsman archives, go to SI.com/sportsman. SI.com

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED (ISSN 0038-822X) is published weekly, with an extra issue in February and two issues combined in July and at year end, by Time Inc. Principal Office: Time & Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, NY 10020-1393. Ann Moore, Chairman, CEO; Richard Atkinson, Executive Vice President. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40110178. Return undeliverable Canada Addresses to: Postal Stn A, PO Box 4322, Toronto, ON, M5W 3G9. GST #122781974RT. U.S. subscription: $81.95 for 55 issues. SUBSCRIBERS: If the postal service alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within two years. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SPORTS ILLUSTRATED, Post Office Box 30602, Tampa, FL 33630-0602, MAILING LIST: We make a portion of our mailing list available to reputable firms. If you would prefer that we not include your name, please call or write us. ©2004 TIME INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED. SPORTS ILLUSTRATED IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF TIME INC.

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SUBSCRIPTIONS: For 24/7 service, please use our website: www.si.com/customerservice. You can also call 1-800-528-5000 or write to SI at P.O. Box 30602, Tampa, FL 33630-0602.

BRIAN BAHR/GETTY IMAGES (FOOTBALL); DAVID N. BERKWITZ (2)

Stay cool this winter.

Get a Verizon Wireless LG Phone.
We've got the coolest technology going.
And, of course, tons of games and ring tones.

And if you buy one now, you'll get 3 more of that same phone for **FREE**.

with 2-year Agreement and activation on each phone

1.800.2 JOIN IN verizonwireless.com

Subject to Calling Plans and credit approval. $175 cancellation, taxes, other charges and restrictions apply. Cannot combine with other offers. Offer and coverage not available everywhere. Activation fee: 2 yrs.-$15. While supplies last. Shipping charges may apply. Video messages can be sent to other video-capable phones; recipient capability to view video depends on equipment compatibility. ©2004 Verizon Wireless

verizon wireless
We never stop working for you.®

VIDEO PHONE

LG VX7000

Lets you shoot and send video to friends all over. Including Hollywood.

$149.99 retail price
-$50.00 mail-in rebate

$99.99

after rebate (taxes apply)
2-year agreement required

CAMERA PHONE

LG VX6100

Has zoom and flash to satisfy even the most demanding shutterbug.

$99.99 retail price
-$50.00 mail-in rebate

$49.99

after rebate (taxes apply)
2-year agreement required

SPEAKERPHONE

LG VX4500

Gives you fun, hands-free talking anytime, to anyone.

$79.99 retail price
-$50.00 mail-in rebate

$29.99

after rebate (taxes apply)
2-year agreement required

LG

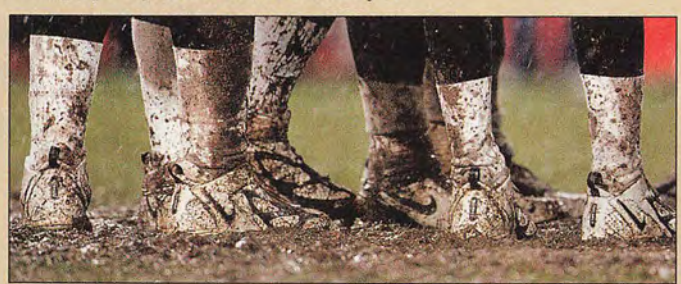
47
Riddell

Leading Off

One-Stop Slopping

Ravens linebacker Edgerton Hartwell and defensive tackle Kelly Gregg (97) get a wet grip on Patriots running back Patrick Pass in Foxboro on Sunday. New England outscored Baltimore 21–0 in the second half and won 24–3, becoming one of three 10–1 teams in the NFL (page 141).

Photographs by Damian Strohmeyer



For daily Web-only Leading Off galleries, go to **si.com/scorecard**.

Leading Off

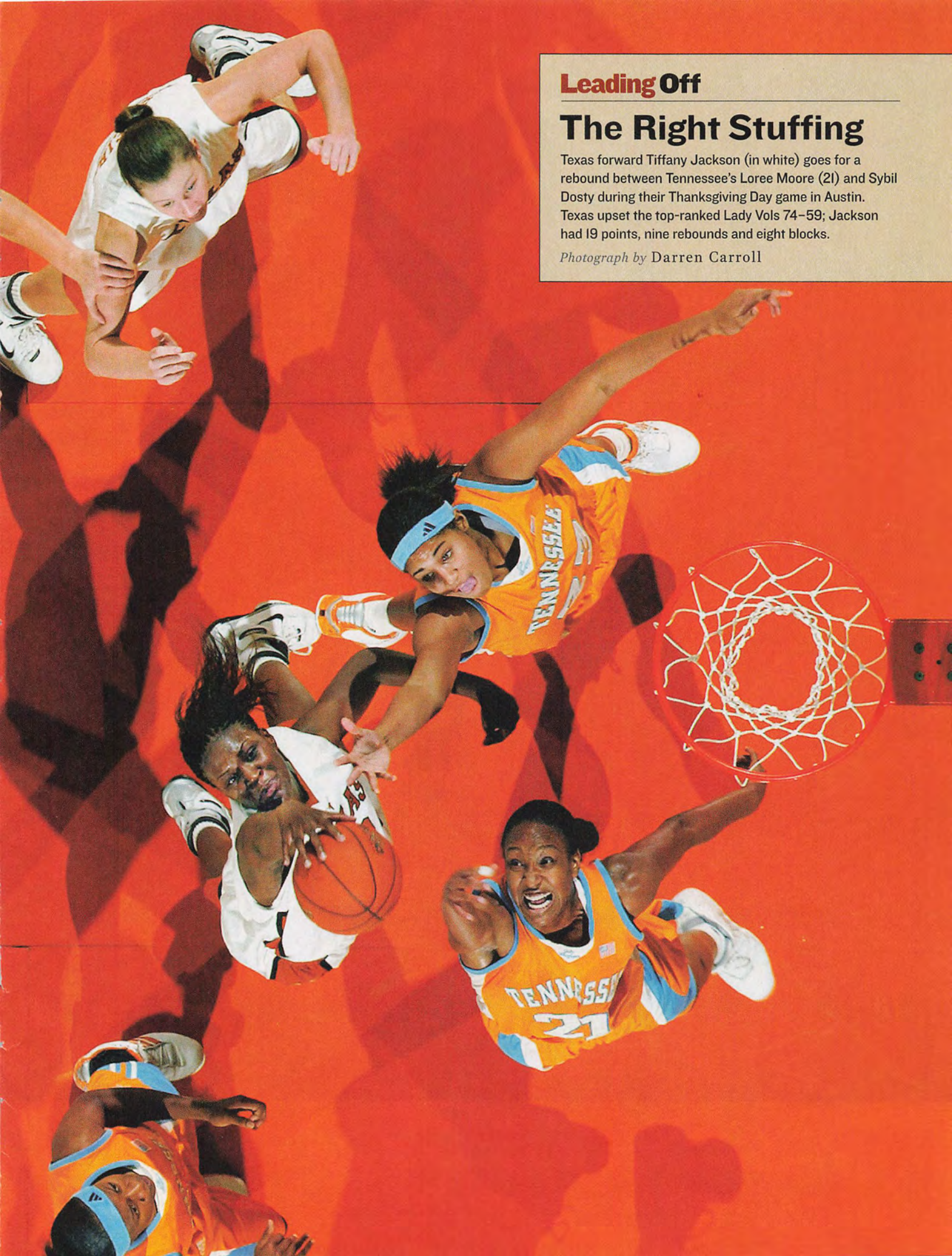
Lean Two

Apolo Anton Ohno of the U.S. has China's Sui Baoku breathing down his neck during a 500-meter preliminary at the ISU World Cup in Madison, Wis., last Saturday. Ohno went on to win four medals over the weekend.

Photograph by Matthew Stockman/Getty Images

24
ADT
Qwest

BIG 12 CONFERENCE



Leading Off

The Right Stuffing

Texas forward Tiffany Jackson (in white) goes for a rebound between Tennessee's Loree Moore (21) and Sybil Dosty during their Thanksgiving Day game in Austin. Texas upset the top-ranked Lady Vols 74–59; Jackson had 19 points, nine rebounds and eight blocks.

Photograph by Darren Carroll

Color. Power. Style. Find your Verve.

OLYMPUS
Stylus Verve 4.0 MEGAPIXEL
OLYMPUS

© 2004 Olympus Imaging America Inc.

Stylus Verve™ digital camera. **Designed to Do More.™**

OLYMPUS®

OLYMPUS
Stylus Verve
4.0

Steel Home

The true MVPs of the first half of the NFL season should be the Steelers' offensive line (*Back in the Running*, Nov. 15). Jeff Hartings is a fantastic center, Alan Faneca and Keydrick Vincent are the toughest guards in the league, and Marvel Smith and Oliver Ross are warriors at the tackle position. Bill Cowher realized that when you burn up the clock, it can give the defense the confidence to improve. As you can see, it has worked.

Rick Nagy, Coconut Creek, Fla.

There are no Steelers voted to the midseason All-Pro team (Nov. 15). That just proves that pro football is a team sport.

Toni Hartman, Fayette City, Pa.

Asian Pioneer

Although I enjoyed Steve Rushin's column on Phoenix Suns guard Yuta Tabuse (AIR AND SPACE, Nov. 15), it's important to note that a Japanese-American player, Wataru Misaka—born in Utah and a member of the Utes' 1944 NCAA and '47 NIT winners—broke the NBA's color barrier in '47 after having been chosen in the first round of the draft by the New York Knicks. Though he played in only three games, he made it into the league when anti-Asian sentiment was at a fever pitch. His accomplishment should not be overlooked.

Stuart Min, Pittsburgh

THE FIRST Misaka (center) with N.Y. coach Joe Lapchick and Lee Knorek.

Out of Sight

How can you honestly give an opinion on improving the marketing of women's sports (SCORECARD, Nov. 15) when your magazine publishes so few articles on athletes who are not men?

Danielle Charette
Durham, Conn.

I think people don't watch women's soccer or basketball because, quite frankly and without an ounce of bias against women, it's not as good as men's. Women are not as fast, as strong or as skillful. It's a matter of quality, not marketing.

David Dix, Wakefield, Mass.

Where did L. Jon Wertheim do his research, in a cave? He ignores one of the most successful women's leagues, the LPGA. More than 100 women have earned more than $1 million during their professional careers, and that doesn't include ancillary income.

David J. Kolander, Scottsdale, Ariz.

Youth Movement

As a physical educator reading *Get Out and Play!* (Nov. 15), I want to be clear about one thing: We do not teach gym. The gym is where we teach, but what we teach is physical education. Wake up, America—we are the fattest country on the planet! Most of the blame has to be placed on parents. When I go out to dinner and see a child who is already obese stuffing his or her face with dessert, I have to ask myself why the parents are allowing this. It's time to stop being your children's friend and start being their parent.

Derek Muharem, Naugatuck, Conn.

Get Out and Play! was both disturbing and insightful. As a high school student myself, I know how difficult it is to fit an exercise routine into a busy schedule. That's why I ride my bike seven miles each way to get to and from my school in Manhattan. Sadly, many places are not bike-friendly enough to make such a routine feasible. Adding bike paths is just one of many things our communities can do to make it easier and safer to get exercise.

Stephen Kahn Bonnett, Brooklyn

There are, as you note, many causes for child obesity, but to lay even part of the blame at the feet of an educational system struggling mightily to increase the academic success of American children is a serious mistake. Then again, blaming the schools for any social ill is a time-honored tradition. Let parents turn off the TV and unplug the video games; let parents take more control of their kids' nutrition; let communities focus more on physical-fitness programs and less on elite competitive sports programs; *then* let schools pull some money—and emphasis—out of interscholastic sports programs, which benefit the few, and put the money into P.E. programs and facilities that benefit all. None of which is going to happen.

Jim Weber, Austin

I'm in the 10th grade, and for me class begins at eight and I don't return home until six, when I must do a load of homework. My school has two $6,000 snack machines but couldn't ante up the funds to build a field. Your article on child obesity did not shock me.

Davi Hamerman, Teaneck, N.J.

No More Cheesecake

It is killing me to see pictures of Paris Hilton in SI week after week (SCORECARD, Nov. 15). She has less to do with sports than the swimsuit models. Please do not make me cancel my subscription!

Greg Cooper, Hamden, Conn.

To Contact SI

LETTERS

- Please e-mail us at letters@si.timeinc.com or fax us at 212-467-4049. Letters should include the writer's full name, address and home telephone number and may be edited for clarity and space.

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

- For 24/7 service, please use our website, www.si.com/customerservice. You can also call 1-800-528-5000 or write to SI at P.O. Box 30602, Tampa, FL. 33630-0602.

ADVERTISING

- For ad rates, an editorial calendar or a media kit, e-mail us at sipubqueries@timeinc.com.

AL TIELEMANS (COVER); CORBIS

©2004 movado group, inc.

rolland's jewelers
vernon hills, il 847 918 7300

MOVADO

the art of time

pete sampras, grand slam legend.
movado se®. sports edition. stainless steel.
silver soleil dial. swiss made. water resistant.
movado is proud of its long-time association with the arts.
movado.com

Here's to the new star on the tree.

Introducing the limited edition Crown Royal ornament. This beautiful crown and pillow in hand-blown, hand-painted glass is a world-class collectible. Order online or look for specially marked boxes* this holiday. It's the ornament to outshine all others.

*Order forms included.

Crown the Season

Order now at crownroyal.com/tree

It's about quality, not quantity.

CROWN ROYAL. IMPORTED IN THE BOTTLE. BLENDED CANADIAN WHISKY. 40% ALCOHOL BY VOLUME (80 PROOF). ©2004 THE CROWN ROYAL COMPANY, STAMFORD, CT.

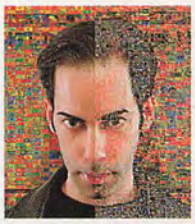
It's All About the Team

A SPECIAL BOND Verducci was moved by Red Sox Nation.

TWO WEEKS after the Red Sox won the World Series, senior writer Tom Verducci traveled to Boston to look at their mail. He was fascinated by the unique bond between the team and its fans—"I hadn't experienced anything like it in 22 years of covering sports," Verducci says—and he thought he'd see how the faithful were handling October happiness. In his mind's eye Verducci envisioned perhaps a half-dozen bulging mailbags. But in a room on the second floor of Fenway Park he found a small mountain range of envelopes addressed to the Sox. There were also, he was told, more than 10,000 e-mails.

Verducci spent an entire day and much of a night reading not just thank-yous and congratulations but tales of lives transformed by the Sox' postseason triumphs. One daughter wrote about her dying father's battling to hang on to see the world championship that had been denied him all his 79 years. When he reached the woman by phone, and she described how the team had given the family strength and brought them closer together, Verducci was moved to tears. "If you're looking for something good in sports, this was it," he says.

WHEN OUR photo editors commissioned Robert Silvers to create this year's Sportsmen of the Year cover, they were enlisting not just an innovative artist but—unbeknownst to them—a Plymouth, Mass., native and MIT graduate who is a longtime Red Sox fan. "Believe me," says Silvers, "when I got the call from SI, it was not lost on me that this was *my* team."



MOSAIC Silvers's tiles tell many tales.

It was at MIT in 1995 that Silvers developed the patented photomosaic technique that he has employed to create variations on the *Mona Lisa* and van Gogh's *Starry Night* as well as covers for *Playboy*, *Newsweek* and LIFE. (To see more of his work, visit photomosaic.com.)

Silvers, 36, who lives in Marshfield, Mass., used thousands of photos supplied by SI to create our Sportsmen cover. While the process is computer-aided, he selects from as many as 30 possible pictures for each of the 2,000 tiles, searching for the right color, content and, in the case of the outer ring of the Red Sox logo, "images that enhanced the sense of curvature."

He says he enjoyed wallowing in the broken Curse one more time. "That I could in some small way be a part of the new era," he says, "made this assignment extra special."

SAD TIMES Mannix charted the Sox.

SI REPORTER Chris Mannix, 24, a Quincy native and former Boston Celtics ball boy, is also a Red Sox fan, but until he charted the team's highs and lows *(page 55)*, he didn't know just how bad the Sox were after winning five World Series in the early 1900s. "They had three 100-loss seasons in a row in the 1920s," says Mannix. "They were just awful. I've complained a lot about their shortcomings, but I only remember back to the 1986 World Series and Bill Buckner. I have a whole new respect for Red Sox fans in the 80-to-90 age bracket."

ROBERT SILVERS; MEL LEVINE (MANNIX)

Here's to outdoing the neighbors.

It's about quality, not quantity. • *Visit crownroyal.com*

CROWN ROYAL • IMPORTED IN THE BOTTLE • BLENDED CANADIAN WHISKY • 40% ALCOHOL BY VOLUME (80 PROOF) • ©2003 THE CROWN ROYAL COMPANY, STAMFORD, CT

A D V E R T I S E M E N T

Wrangler

FIVE STAR

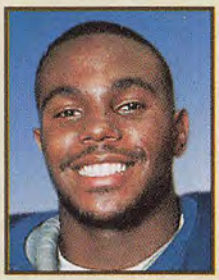
STUDENT ATHLETES

OF THE YEAR

We proudly honor these Wrangler Five Star Student Athletes of the Year for their achievements on the field, in the classroom and in the community. They were selected from the many outstanding nominees submitted by family members, teammates, coaches and fans at si.com/5star. Wrangler will donate $1,000 in each winner's name to his or her high school athletic department.

Michaella Gallina
PUEBLO, COLO.

Gallina, 16, recently helped her Pueblo West High volleyball team win a league title, earning all-conference defensive honors. A black belt in karate, she is No. 1 in her junior class with a 4.0 GPA and is president of the PWHS Future Business Leaders of America. Gallina has chaired a rodeo for handicapped kids, raised funds for a paralyzed student and worked in a local women's crisis center.



C.J. Green
FEDERAL WAY, WASH.

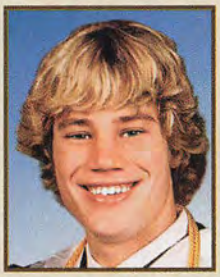
Federal Way High's student body president is also top man on the gridiron. This season the 18-year-old senior running back scored 17 TDs and rolled up five 100-yard rushing games in a second straight 1,000-yard season. A point guard in basketball, sprinter on the track team and Federal Way's 2004 Homecoming king, Green keeps a 3.5 GPA, speaks to area schools and raises funds for his athletic squads.

Ali Seena Jaffery
OMAHA, NEB.

The Afghan refugee's father and older brother were killed by the Taliban in the 1990s, and his family came to the U.S. in 2001. Despite starting late at Millard North High, Jaffery, 18, sports a 3.74 GPA, scored two game-winning goals last spring for the soccer team and expects to graduate in May. He also mentors kids at a YMCA and works part time to help support his mother and younger siblings.

Caitlin Love
FAIRFAX STATION, VA.

Love, 16, was selected to attend a national Olympic Development soccer camp, where in February she'll showcase her skills for U.S. team and college coaches. This season the junior defender helped lead Bishop Ireton to the league semis for the third straight year. A 4.0 student who also runs track, Love has worked at an animal hospital and distributed food to the needy at a community center.



Abe Taylor
MECHANICSVILLE, VA.

Taylor has excelled for Hanover High's football, cross-country and soccer squads, but his best sport may be wrestling. He took third in his regional tournament last year and is now ranked sixth in Virginia at 160 pounds. Taylor, 18, owns a 4.0 GPA with a load of AP courses, assists youth wrestlers with technique and speaks to elementary students about peer pressure and developing strong character.

Wrangler

Real. Comfortable. Jeans.

© 2004 VF Jeanswear, Inc.

The Real Crimson Tide

by Steve Rushin

AT HARVARD football alumni have a choice. They can one day run the West Coast offense or one day run the actual West Coast. In the last six years seven Crimson ballers have signed with NFL teams. And one student manager, class of '77, cofounded a Seattle software concern called Microsoft. "You'll still see Steve Ballmer on campus," says Harvard football coach Tim Murphy of the water boy turned Windows magnate. "You'll see Senator Kennedy at games."

Fifty years ago Ted Kennedy was a Harvard football letterman. But those were leaner days—for Kennedy and for Harvard football. This fall the Crimson had its best season since 1901, going 10–0 and winning the Ivy League. At week's end Harvard was 36th in the Sagarin ratings, the highest the school has been since Timothy Leary taught psych on campus. Alas, the Ivy League's self-imposed ban on postseason play means the Crimson won't be taking USC to school in the BCS. Harvard didn't even go to the Division I-AA playoffs, while Lafayette, whom the Crimson beat 38–23 in October, did.

"The Yale game is our bowl game," Murphy says without regret. "Thanksgiving is the greatest holiday in the world. We've won our last game"—this year, Harvard thrashed the Elis 35–3—"and I get to second-guess the coaches on TV all day long."

Every other year they play the Harvard-Yale game in the Yale Bowl, but every week Harvard plays in a fishbowl. "I got to meet Tommy Lee Jones, who played guard in the famous 29–29 'win' over Yale in 1968," says Crimson senior quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick of the down-16-with-42-seconds-left comeback. "He still follows every game and knows all the stats. He'd ask me what I was thinking on this play or that play."

Fitzpatrick didn't want to play for Harvard, which is precisely why he plays for Harvard. Murphy only recruits players who *don't* want to be recruited by him. "We want kids who aspire to play at Stanford and Notre Dame but aren't quite ready," he says.

And so Bobby Everett grew up in Ann Arbor dreaming of playing for Michigan. In high school he telephoned the Wolverines' offensive coordinator and said, "I don't think I have much chance of playing there, but would you mind bringing me in and treating me like a recruit for a day?" (Remarkably, Michigan obliged.) This fall, as a senior linebacker whose field of concentration is engineering, Everett led the Crimson in solo tackles.

Matt Birk of St. Paul also wanted to play in the Big Ten but had to settle for Harvard. He's now an All-Pro center for the Vikings.

Ryan Fitzpatrick's lone scholarship offer came from Eastern Washington. Harvard was his safety school. As a freshman in Cambridge he twice knocked would-be tacklers unconscious. He won two Ivy titles. Next month Fitzpatrick will play in the Hula Bowl while waiting for his name to be called in April's NFL draft.

The weakside safety, Ricky Williamson, was raised in State College, Pa., where he dreamed of playing for Penn State. Two weeks ago, in Harvard's 101-year-old stadium, he returned an interception 100 yards for a touchdown in the Crimson's win over Yale.

Next spring Williamson will graduate with a biology degree. Everyone graduates. Bill Gates dropped out of Harvard, but football players don't. In Murphy's 11 seasons, *every* four-year player he's brought to Harvard has graduated and every one of those players has won an Ivy League championship. Murphy had to run down one ex-Crimson in Europe and, like a crazed bill collector, browbeat him into completing his course work. "Like a bounty hunter," corrects Murphy, boyish and braces-wearing at age 47.

> In Tim Murphy's 11 seasons at Harvard, *every* four-year player has graduated and every one has won an Ivy League title.

The only member of his working-class family to attend college (Springfield, '78), Murphy has a green thumb with blue-collar kids. When he recruited a Nebraska farm boy nine years ago, the prospective tight end told him, "Sorry, Coach, but only geniuses and millionaires go to Harvard." Murphy persuaded him otherwise, and six years later Chris Eitzmann had interned on Wall Street, captained Harvard and spent two years in the NFL with the Patriots.

When Murphy visited Isaiah Kacyvenski's house in Endicott, N.Y., he knocked on the door and—getting no answer—let himself in. "It felt like it was 48 degrees inside," says Murphy. "Down the stairs comes this very humble kid. I ask him where his parents are, and he says, 'Coach, I'm sorry to tell you my mother was killed in a car accident last week.' " Four years later Kacyvenski was a four-year starter and fourth-round NFL draft choice who never got below an honors grade in premed. He's now in his fifth season at outside linebacker for the Seahawks.

All of which is to say: The Harvard man of tomorrow is more likely to have Roman numerals on his Super Bowl ring (Jamil Soriano, class of '03, spent last season on the Patriots' practice squad) than in his name (Endicott Peabody II, class of '42, was an All-America lineman who became governor of Massachusetts). And that, in some strange but quintessentially American way, feels like progress. □

For a collection of Steve Rushin's columns, go to **SI.com/writers.**

SIMON BRUTY

Sports Illustrated

Edited by
STEPHEN CANNELLA

"The suspended Ron Artest put

Scorec

A Real Stretch

Why do so many coaches who look like geniuses in college seem to lose their faculties in the NFL? Going pro isn't easy, but here's how it can be done **By Peter King**

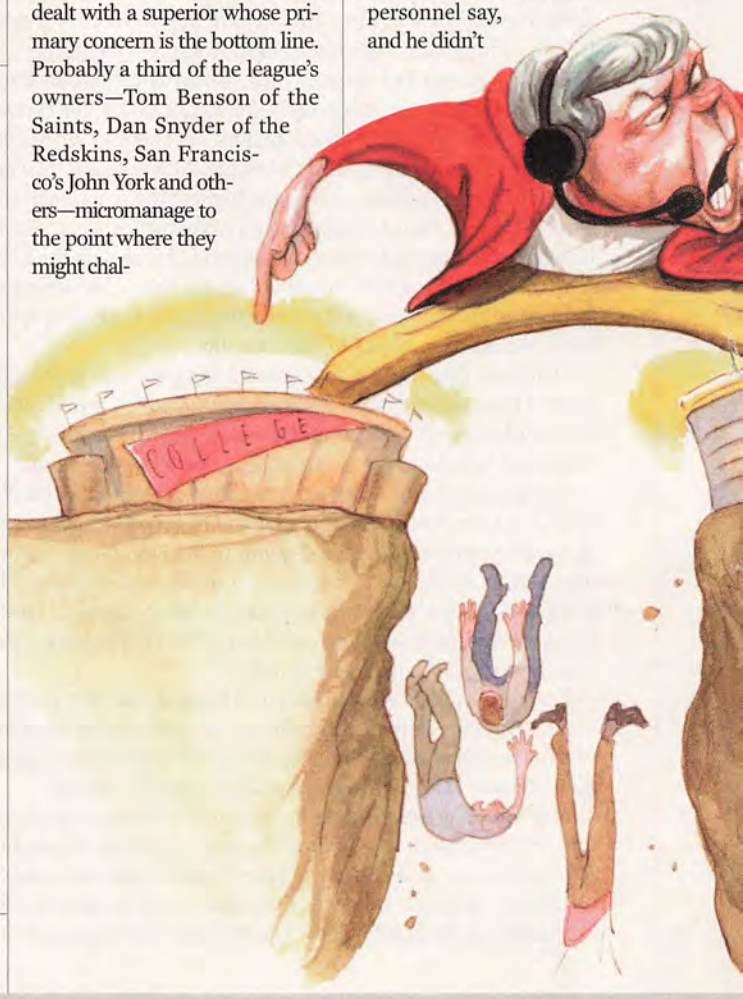
LAST WEEK Iowa football coach Kirk Ferentz signed a three-year contract extension to stay in Iowa City. Ferentz, a former offensive line coach with the Browns and the Ravens, also made sure he retained the right to jump to an NFL head-coaching job. But while he'd certainly make more money in the pro game—and would likely be on the short list for a team or two this off-season—he's not interested in going to the NFL. For now. "Bigger isn't always better," Ferentz said last Friday. "We've got five kids, and I want my kids to know where home is. That can be hard in the NFL now. There are very few Bill Cowhers and Jeff Fishers anymore, guys in the same place for 10 years."

For many college coaches, the NFL looms as the ultimate career goal. In practical terms it is: The Browns seem certain to part ways with former Miami coach Butch Davis, who is signed through 2007, and he'll get most of the $12 million he's due when he's let go. But the pro game has besmirched its share of college stars. Steve Spurrier lost his genius hat somewhere between Gainesville and the Beltway. He was a 12–20 failure in his two-year Redskins run and last week returned to his college roots, taking the South Carolina job. Davis, 24–36 in his fourth year in Cleveland, has been the victim of poor personnel choices—by him and by his front office—and has suffered from player unrest. Dennis Erickson, who won two national titles at Miami, is coaching the worst 49ers team in a generation. To further underscore how different the pro and college games can be: Pete Carroll was a .500 coach with the Jets and the Patriots before going to Southern Cal, where, in his fourth season, he's trying to win his second straight national championship.

This winter NFL vacancies could be siren songs to Carroll, Notre Dame's Ty Willingham and LSU's Nick Saban, who turned down the bright lights of Chicago last year to stay in Baton Rouge. The five caution flags we'd wave in front of any coach thinking of movin' on up:

1) Bolt when you hear the words "hands-on owner." A good number of college coaches trip up in the NFL because they've never dealt with a superior whose primary concern is the bottom line. Probably a third of the league's owners—Tom Benson of the Saints, Dan Snyder of the Redskins, San Francisco's John York and others—micromanage to the point where they might challenge spending $75,000 on the backup tight end's bonus. What you want to hear from an owner is, "It's your show, and I'm going to let you run it."

2) Make sure you're happy with your G.M. or personnel guru. Saban won't say this, but he turned down the Bears' job because he didn't have final personnel say, and he didn't



Get a fresh version of Scorecard every weekday at **SI.com/scorecard.**

his involuntary NBA sabbatical to good use

—AFTER THE BRAWL, PAGE 27

ard

have faith in G.M. Jerry Angelo. Smart move. Ferentz is smart about this too. He likely wouldn't take a pro job unless a trusted scouting friend—Scott Pioli of the Patriots or Phil Savage of the Ravens, for example—were running the personnel show. Davis learned about late owner Al Lerner's blank-check mentality in 2001, but no team in recent years has gotten such poor production from high draftees.

3) Don't think you don't have to sweat the details. Spurrier failed because he didn't adjust to some of the simplest differences between the pro and college games, like the complexity of NFL strategy. Said an assistant on his Washington staff, "Steve was bored by blocking schemes to protect the quarterback, so all he'd ever say [to offensive line coach Kim Helton] was, 'Block 'em up. Gotta block 'em up.' You can't ask the line coach to do that without getting other offensive coaches involved—and being involved yourself."

4) Master the salary cap. Erickson's in trouble because the 49ers are trying to extricate themselves from a $28 million cap hole, the result of bad recent signings. A newcomer to the NFL should resist the lure of fast, sexy signings and return to financial ground zero—as the Patriots did when Bill Belichick came to New England. They erased a $10 million cap deficit in Year One.

5) Create the same collegial atmosphere as the one you've just left. "It can be done," said Patriots linebacker Tedy Bruschi. The most underrated reason for New England's winning two Super Bowls in three years is that the players feel like an integral part of the whole. Bruschi is one of several players who have signed below-market contracts to join or stay with New England in the last two years. Draft players who aren't looking for a limo ride to the stadium; sign free agents you're sure will be team guys.

In short, college coaches, the grass ain't always greener in those pro stadiums, though the money may make it look that way.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE BRODNER. JOHN TODD/ISI (DONOVAN HEAD); JOHN TODD/WIREIMAGE.COM (DONOVAN ACTION)

Trade Deficit

Star players like Landon Donovan are leaving MLS for Europe. Is this a disaster—or a sign that American soccer is coming of age?

If you're a Major League Soccer fan, it would be easy to bemoan Nov. 24 as a dark day for the nine-year-old league. San Jose Earthquakes striker Landon Donovan, the "face of MLS," as one official put it, announced he will rejoin Germany's Bayer Leverkusen (which owns his contract) after leading the Quakes to two MLS championships during a four-year loan. "We're humble enough to say the leagues in Europe are a little higher quality than MLS, even though we're closing the gap," said Donovan, the three-time reigning U.S. player of the year. "The day-in, day-out pressure to perform will make me a better player."

The 22-year-old Donovan joined several young Yanks who have left MLS for Europe this year, including U.S. national team regulars DaMarcus Beasley, 22; Carlos Bocanegra, 25; and Bobby Convey, 21. Yet those who blame MLS for losing its crown jewels are missing the point: This is how the soccer world works. "It's an example of the evolution of the sport in this country that the top European clubs are interested in our young players," says Richard Motzkin, whose company SportsNet LLC represents Donovan and Freddy Adu. "This is something that helps MLS gain greater worldwide acceptance."

Until MLS can finish building its own stadiums (two are done, and six more are on the way) and start turning a profit, it will continue being mostly an exporter on the international player market. (Beasley's sale to Holland's PSV Eindhoven earned the league nearly $3 million.) Still, Donovan stressed, his departure had less to do with money than his desire to compete at Europe's highest levels and show loyalty to Leverkusen, which signed him out of Redlands (Calif.) East Valley High at age 16. (Had talks begun, MLS commissioner Don Garber told associates, the league was willing to pay Donovan "twice as much" as Adu's league-high $500,000 salary, in addition to purchasing his contract for an estimated $5 million.)

For now MLS has to play its own version of Moneyball, investing in underpriced foreign talent (e.g., Caribbeans and Central Americans) while bringing home selected expats (Clint Mathis, of Germany's Hanover 96, may be next) and developing the next wave of American stars. "It's not easy to replace players like DaMarcus and Landon, but we have a tremendous development program that we're expanding to have a fully fledged reserve league next year," says MLS deputy commissioner Ivan Gazidis. "We don't believe we've even managed to get our arms around the talent pool we have in this country." —*Grant Wahl*

BVD MANUAL

A man's guide to his skivvies

UNDERWEAR RETIREMENT AGE

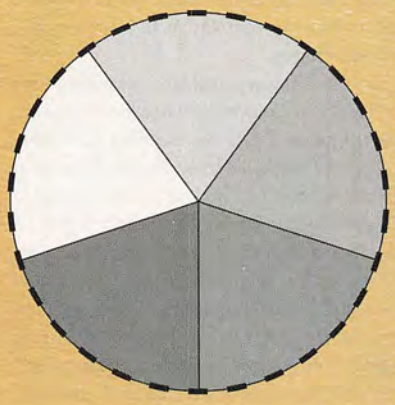
When to call in the relief for your briefs.

Properly cared for, BVD® underwear will deliver untold days of enjoyment. But eventually, **the party must end.** The following are simple guidelines for recognizing when a pair should join the ranks of your dust rags.

Quality, comfort, and style. What a package!

SHOW YOUR COLORS

Tones and shades are great indicators for an underwear life cycle. Simply cut along lines, hold color wheel up to your skivvies, and consult key to define level of undie wear.



- *Fresh*
- *Broken in*
- *Suitable for yard work*
- *Hampers love life*
- *Weapon of mass destruction*

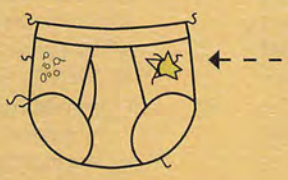
PINKIES

Never wash white BVD®underwear with colored garments, especially red ones. If you inadvertently create pink underpants, do not wear them. **Many mistakenly think they can get away with it**, but eventually they are found out at the local gym, during a doctor's examination, or while Greco-Roman wrestling.

THE HOLE STORY

Take pride in your underpants. The ideal pair has only four holes (one waist, two legs, one fly). Over the extended life of your shorts, a few holes are permissible–but do not let your skivvies reach the point of resembling a colander. To find out whether a hole is too big, get a quarter and your undies to perform **The Quarter Test**.

[Step 1]
Try pushing coin through hole.



[Step 2]
If quarter goes through...

[Step 3]
new underwear needed.

[Step 4]
BVD®underwear! Yea!

BVD *Built for guys.*

available at JCPENNEY and www.jcpenney.com
JCPenney

© 2004 The B.V.D. Licensing Corporation, P.O. Box 90015, Bowling Green, KY 42102-9015

After the Brawl

The ugly incident at The Palace of Auburn Hills is still sending out ripples

IT'S BEEN MORE than a week since the last beer was hurled at The Palace of Auburn Hills, but the Pacers-Pistons brawl is still playing itself out. The Pacers won three of their first four games after losing three starters to suspensions, thanks mainly to the stellar play of point guard Jamaal Tinsley *(right)*. But with so much else happening, it was easy to forget there was an NBA season in progress. Consider:

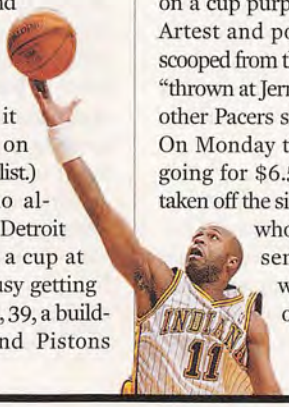
• Ron Artest—suspended for the season, with a salary loss of $5 million—put his involuntary sabbatical to good use. Two days after NBA commissioner David Stern banned him, Artest was on the *Today* show, ostensibly to show remorse but actually to plug *Chapter III*, the CD he produced for the R&B group Allure. "I've been working real hard on doing a lot of positive things," Artest told Matt Lauer. "And you know, I've got this album coming out. It's positive." (On Monday it ranked 25,449th on Amazon.com's sales list.)

• John Green, who allegedly started the Detroit mess by throwing a cup at Artest, was also busy getting his story out. Green, 39, a building contractor and Pistons season-ticket holder, pleaded his case on *Good Morning America* and *Larry King Live*, calling Artest "a thug" and saying, "I don't go around breaking the law. If they have found that I broke the law, I'll pay the price." As of Monday, Green, who prosecutors say can be seen on tape punching Artest, hadn't been charged with a crime, though he is reportedly on probation for a third DUI offense. He was also in and out of prison between 1986 and 1994 for offenses including assault and carrying a concealed weapon.

• Lawsuits were filed by two injured spectators against the Pacers and individual players. John Ackerman, 67, a retired auto worker allegedly knocked unconscious by a chair thrown by a fan, added the Palace to his suit.

• CI Host, a Web services and software company, offered $10,000 to the first person involved in the brawl to tattoo the company's logo on his fist. Meanwhile, eBay customers could bid on a cup purportedly tossed at Artest and popcorn that was scooped from the arena floor and "thrown at Jermaine O'Neal and other Pacers staff and players." On Monday the popcorn was going for $6.50. The cup was taken off the site when someone who no doubt had a sense of its true worth put in a bid of $99.9 million.

—Albert Chen



Go Figure

$300,000 Average monthly salary for NHL players last season.

$10,000 Monthly stipend the NHL players' union will send to locked-out members for November and December; future payments will decrease.

106 Points scored in the Bengals' 58–48 win over the Browns, the most since the NFL-AFL merger in 1970.

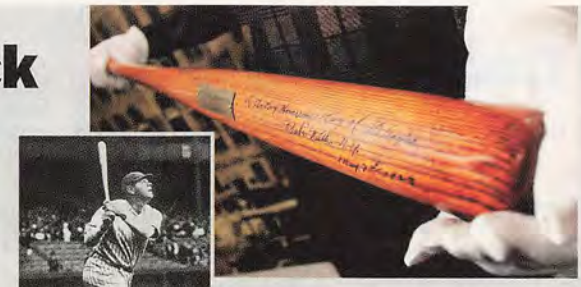
774 Points scored by Division II Pittsburg (Kans.) State this season, breaking the NCAA all-division football record of 765 set by Harvard in 1886.

12 Snow scrapers distributed to Lions rookies by coach Steve Mariucci, part of his effort to help them adjust to NFL—and Detroit—life.

$3.5 million Career Skins Games earnings by Fred Couples, who won the event for a record fifth time.

Sultan's Stick

After 81 years one of the Babe's bats is back



GOOD WOOD The Louisville Slugger used to christen the House That Ruth Built should bring $1 million plus.

ON APRIL 18, 1923, before the first game ever played at Yankee Stadium, Babe Ruth said he'd give a year of his life to hit a home run in the new park. It took him three innings: Ruth crushed a ball into the rightfield bleachers, and New York beat—naturally—the Red Sox 4–1.

Ruth's agent had agreed to donate the bat used for Ruth's first homer of the season to the *Los Angeles Evening Herald*, which planned to award it to the city's top high school slugger. A few weeks later the 36-inch, 45½-ounce Louisville Slugger, which the Babe inscribed TO THE BOY HOME RUN KING OF LOS ANGELES, was presented to 16-year-old Victor Orsatti (four homers) of Manual Arts High. Orsatti kept the bat until his death in 1984 and left it to an unidentified woman who cared for him in his later years. This week Sotheby's and SportsCards Plus will auction off the bat for probably upward of $1 million. Orsatti's caretaker, who now spends much of her time in Mexico, has pledged to donate most of the proceeds to an orphanage there.

NBC-TV/AP (ARTEST); ESPN (INSET); DARRON CUMMINGS/AP (TINSLEY); MIKE SEGAR/REUTERS (BAT); TRANSCENDENTAL GRAPHICS (RUTH)

For the Record

Died At 85, after a long illness, Gunder Hägg, who set the world record in the mile in 1945 and held it until Roger Bannister broke the four-minute barrier in 1954. The son of a forest woodcutter, Hägg *(left)* grew up in the Swedish countryside and said he competed from the age of 16 not to become a national hero but to "make myself eligible for a decent job." Without a coach or formal training regimen, Hägg rose to prominence in the summer of 1942, when he set world marks at seven distances and became the first person to run 5,000 meters in under 14 minutes. In all, "Gunder the Wonder" set 15 middle-distance world records, and after a tour of the U.S. in 1943 he was named Male Athlete of the Year by the Associated Press. Two years later Hägg ran the mile in 4:01.4, a mark that seemed unbreakable until Bannister's renowned run.

Ended Nebraska's NCAA-record 35-year bowl streak, after a 26–20 loss to Colorado last Friday. In their first season under former Raiders coach Bill Callahan the Cornhuskers went 5–6, their worst record since 1961. Callahan's West Coast offense was a radical change for the traditionally run-oriented Huskers, who ranked 70th in the nation in total offense. Last weekend Nebraska athletic director Steve Pederson, who was booed by the Huskers faithful during last week's game, reiterated his support for Callahan, who took over a team that went 9–3 for coach Frank Solich in 2003. But he added, "We do not want to let this program gravitate toward mediocrity for any extended period of time."

Angered By a graffiti-inspired Nike ad campaign, citizens of the neatnik nation of Singapore. In recent weeks hundreds of small, seemingly randomly placed posters featuring cartoon images of LeBron James have been pasted over other advertisements in Singaporean bus shelters. "The idea is to do something naughty . . . to disrupt the neat environment of Singapore and stay in line with the street feel of this LeBron James basketball campaign," a Nike spokesperson said. In a country whose leaders sometimes seem obsessed with civic order—remember the American teenager who was publicly caned for vandalism in 1994?—some people think naughty isn't nice. More than 50 complaints have been lodged with the company that owns the ad rights to the bus shelters. The Nike campaign is part of a $100 million marketing agreement the shoe giant signed with the NBA last month to promote basketball in Asia.

Stunned By Indianapolis police, Timberwolves center Michael Olowokandi, who was arrested on Thanksgiving Day on misdemeanor charges of disorderly conduct and trespassing. In the wee hours of Nov. 24, Olowokandi, 29, refused to leave Tiki Bob's, an Indianapolis nightclub, at closing time. Later, when Olowokandi disobeyed orders from police to leave, they subdued the seven-footer with two blasts from a stun gun and took him into custody. Olowokandi was released from jail on Thursday afternoon and suspended for two games by the Timberwolves.

Injured In a plane crash near Telluride Ski Area in Colorado, NBC Sports chairman Dick Ebersol, 57. The 18-seat jet carrying Ebersol and sons Charles, 21, and Edward, 14, burst into flames during takeoff for a flight to South Bend. Six people were on board; the pilot and a flight attendant were killed. Ebersol was helped from the wreckage by his older son. On Monday searchers believed they had found Edward's body.

Died At age 67 from complications of a viral infection, former major league catcher Tom Haller. The three-time All-Star, who retired in 1972, spent most of his 11-year career with the Giants and served as their G.M. from 1981 to '85. Haller was also known for being the answer to a trivia question. In July '72, while with the Tigers, he made history by catching a game against the Royals with older brother Bill, an American League umpire, working behind the plate.

JIM RUYMEN/REUTERS (EBERSOL); CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/AP (STATHAM); RICK WINDHAM/MCKENDREE COLLEGE (FISCHER); BETTMANN/CORBIS (HAGG)

The New Dean

Harry Statham found a home, and a pile of wins, in the NAIA

STAT MAN Guard Brad Fischer (left) helped his coach make history.

WHEN HE arrived at McKendree College, a tiny liberal arts school (1,500 students) in Lebanon, Ill., in 1966 to coach men's basketball, Harry Statham had no intention of sticking around. His dream was to coach a high school team to a state championship; he saw the McKendree gig as a stepping stone to that. Four decades later he's still stalking McKendree's sideline—and he's about to become the winningest college coach ever. Last Saturday, McKendree, an NAIA school, beat Freed-Hardeman 78–69 to give Statham, 67, career win number 879, tying him with Dean Smith for the most victories by a coach in any division. "If you coach long enough, those things happen," said Statham, who's never won a national title and reached the NAIA Fab Four only once, in 2003.

Statham *(above left)*, grew up in Illinois idolizing Adolph Rupp, whom he passed on the win list on Nov. 20, and he modeled his program after the up-tempo Kentucky Wildcats. The Bearcats, who were 8–2 and ranked No. 18 in the NAIA Division I poll at week's end, have topped 20 wins in 29 of Statham's 38 seasons at McKendree and reached the postseason 33 times. Said Statham of reaching the milestone, "I'm just going to be glad when it's over." —A.C.

LUKE DONALD, European Ryder Cup Team Player (2004)

ECO-DRIVE Calibre 8700

UNSTOPPABLE.

LUKE DONALD IS.
So is his Citizen Eco-Drive.

Fueled by light,
it never needs a battery.

IT'S UNSTOPPABLE.
Just like the people who wear it.

CITIZEN
ECO-DRIVE

citizenwatch.com

FRED MEYER JEWELERS
LITTMAN JEWELERS

©2004 Citizen Watch Company of America, Inc.

The Show

By Bill Scheft

HAPPY HOLIDAYS. I hate to get tough, but beginning with this column, alcohol sales will be cut off after the third joke.

Two days after being suspended, Ron Artest appears on *Today* The spin is everywhere. Artest was on *Today*, the fan accused of throwing the cup at him appeared on *Good Morning America*, and the chair that got tossed did an hour with Charlie Rose.

John Green, who allegedly threw the cup, is on probation and also has a conviction for carrying a concealed weapon. And how's this for a coincidence? Last week he asked his boss for time off to promote his rap sheet.

The cup purported to be thrown at Artest was briefly auctioned on eBay but was pulled from the site after someone bid $99 million. Well, that makes it official. Mark Cuban has too much money.

On the bright side it's nice to know eBay is policed better than an NBA arena.

In non-Artest NBA news, police twice used a stun gun to shock Timberwolves center Michael Olowokandi when he refused to leave a club. Seems excessive. Usually you can shock Olowokandi by giving him the ball down low.

And you can get him to leave a club for a fourth-round pick.

Fox Network buys rights to BCS bowls for $330 million Great. Now, the BCS rankings will be based on the polls, strength of schedule and *The O'Reilly Factor*.

Colorado will play Oklahoma in the Big 12 title game. Wait a minute. I thought the Buffs' football program wasn't going to be punished any further.

Former Washington coach Rick Neuheisel, fired last year in light of gambling allegations, was cleared of wrongdoing. After a lengthy investigation, it turns out his NCAA pool was above ground.

Browns-Bengals combine for most points in a game since the big merger Did I miss something? What merger? Is it now called NFL–Time Warner?

According to his lawyer, Ricky Williams is ready to serve a four-game suspension and be reinstated. Are you like me? Are you thinking he finally ran out of papers?

Did you see the Colts' offense in Detroit on Thanksgiving? I don't want to say it moved easily, but I was sure Peyton Manning had borrowed a conveyor belt from the Ford plant.

I won money on the Cowboys-Bears game. I took the over, 3½ QBs.

The NFL had its own float in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Sadly, the league did not have time to complete its original project, the Paul Taglia-Balloon.

Bat used by Babe Ruth to hit first HR at Yankee Stadium auctioned by Sotheby's You can tell it's the Babe's bat. The handle is still sticky from pine tar and relish.

The bat comes with a certificate of authenticity signed by the owner and by the pitcher who gave up the homer, Jesse Orosco.

The auction is loaded with rare items. A Honus Wagner card, a Tom Seaver game-worn glove and a 30-year-old grilled cheese sandwich that looks like Jesus Alou.

St. John's imposes sanctions on basketball team An NCAA investigation revealed that a former St. John's player was paid $300 a month by a member of the coaching staff. $300 a month? Come on. That's not enough to pay for a decent term paper.

Pro poker player Gus Hansen on PEOPLE's list of Sexiest Men Alive This just proves my point: Chicks dig guys who go all in on the flop.

My time is up. You've been great. Enjoy Ocean.

Bill Scheft has 13 years left on his copyright for the concept "Purina Norm Chow."

Q+A

LeRoy Neiman

The 77-year-old artist's *The LeRoy Neiman Sketchbook: 1964 Liston vs. Clay 1965 Ali vs. Liston* is out on Dec. 30

SI: What's the story behind the sketchbook?

Neiman: I did sketchbooks for both fights: the preparation, the events around the fight, the fights themselves. They stayed in a drawer for 40 years. But over the last half-dozen years there has been a tremendous number of Ali books. They all have their slant, but I was there!

SI: Muhammad Ali has always been one of your favorite subjects. How did you two meet?

Neiman: In 1962 I went to St. Nicholas Arena in New York. I sat down with him in his dressing room and started drawing him. Ali looks at the drawing and says, "I want to draw." I gave him the pad, and he drew an airplane and a profile which was supposed to be him. He wrote, "Next heavyweight champion of the world, 1963."

SI: When did you last draw Ali?

Neiman: Two years ago, but I wouldn't draw him now. I don't like to draw somebody who isn't what he was.

SI: What athletes interest you today visually?

Neiman: Allen Iverson. Like Ali, he acts the way he feels.

SI: Is there a sport that lends itself best to your art?

Neiman: Baseball. Coming into a ballpark, you hit that green field and it's really something. Baseball is beautiful. But my favorite thing was always boxing because I got to know the fighters.

SI: Why do people in the art community say, "Neiman makes art for people who don't like art."

Neiman: If people don't like what I do, that's all right. I studied classically for four years and taught for 10 years at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. I created the way I paint, and I can't shake it.

—Richard Deitsch

DENISE TRUSCELLO/WIREIMAGE.COM (NEIMAN); LEROY NEIMAN (BOXING SKETCH); ILLUSTRATION BY JEFF WONG

The Beat

By Lisa Altobelli

BRETT FAVRE popped up onstage during the taping of **Tim McGraw**'s *Here and Now* NBC special in Green Bay on Nov. 24, but the Packers quarterback wasn't about to take a pass at one of the country megastar's songs. "He waited to the last minute to get there to make sure I wasn't going to make him sing," McGraw said of his close friend. Favre and McGraw tossed a couple of footballs into the crowd gathered for the show, which also featured rapper **Nelly** and McGraw's wife, **Faith Hill**.

■ **Misty May**, who won beach volleyball gold with **Kerri Walsh** at the Athens Olympics, is now part of another highly athletic couple. On Nov. 13 May *(below)*—with Walsh, who was wearing a pink dress, looking on as a bridesmaid—exchanged

I dos with Florida Marlins catcher **Matt Treanor** at Holy Family Cathedral in Orange, Calif., then partied with 240 guests at a reception at the Center Club in Costa Mesa. "Misty had her bridesmaids cheering her on, and she was very relaxed," says wedding coordinator **Kathy Jo Peterson**. On Saturday, Treanor will lend his wife support from the sideline while May and her playing partner are honored with a bronze plaque at the Manhattan Pier Volleyball Walk of Fame in Manhattan Beach, Calif.

PICTURE THIS Sometimes you just have to let it fly. Authorities at Sydney Airport closed off a runway to host the Longest Drive Competition, a prelim to last weekend's Australian Open. In the charity contest Stuart Appleby beat fellow Aussie John Sendon *(above)* with a 693-yard drive. Said Appleby as his ball bounced (and bounced, and bounced) down the concrete, "It's still softer than the fairways at the British Open."

■ Cowboys safety **Roy Williams** had a busy Thanksgiving, first helping stifle the hapless Bears offense—he made four tackles in a 21–7 Dallas win—then hosting a dinner for his fiancée, **Kelly Rowland**, and the rest of **Destiny's Child** at his suburban Dallas home. The trio was in town to perform its hit *Lose My Breath* during the game's halftime special. Williams and Rowland are planning a March wedding.

■ A con man has to be fast on his feet, and **Matt Damon**, who plays a debonair thief in *Ocean's Twelve*, flashed some decent speed last Thursday when he ran the Feaster Five road race in Andover, Mass., part of his training regimen for the Boston Marathon.

THIS WEEK'S SIGN OF THE **APOCALYPSE**

A minor league hockey player in West Virginia was suspended indefinitely for mooning fans during a game.

"I've run it. My father has run it. Now Matt's up," said Damon's brother **Kyle** of the five-mile race. Damon, 34, averaged 7:38 per mile, but he must shave 23 seconds off that pace at marathon distance to qualify for Boston in the men's 18–34 age group.

■ Former Met **Keith Hernandez** took a memorable turn in "The Boyfriend" episode of *Seinfeld*, but now he's playing the fiancé. Last week he announced he'll wed his girlfriend of three years, **Kai Thompson**, on Valentine's Day. Hernandez also appeared at the *Seinfeld* DVD release party at Rockefeller Center on Nov. 17. . . . **Alex Rodriguez** now has more than the memory of the Yankees' ALCS collapse to keep him up at night. In Miami last Friday he and his wife, **Cynthia**, welcomed daughter **Natasha**, their first child, into the world.

They Said It

MORGAN SHEPHERD

NASCAR driver, on why the NBA brawl couldn't happen in his sport: "None of our fans would ever let go of a beer for any reason, much less throw it at somebody."

MARK NOLAN/GETTY IMAGES (PICTURE THIS); WORTH CANOY/ICON SMI (SHEPHERD); JON NICKSON PHOTOGRAPHY (MAY)

The Week Ahead

What to watch and watch for **By Julia Morrill**

FRIDAY 3

***The Next Great Champ* Fox Sports Net 8 p.m.** | Oscar De La Hoya's reality show ends with a light heavyweight title bout. ***Late Show with David Letterman* CBS 11:35 p.m.** | Former CART racer Alex Zanardi, who lost his legs in a 2001 crash, talks about his book.

SATURDAY 4

Kentucky at North Carolina CBS Noon | Carolina's Rashad McCants, the ACC's second-leading scorer, hopes to atone for last year's clunker against the Wildcats, when he scored four points. **Virginia Tech at Miami ABC 1 p.m.** | The Hokies can clinch a BCS bid.

SUNDAY 5

Birds of Prey NBC 1 p.m. | The downhill event in Beaver Creek, Colo., matches Daron Rahlves, the U.S.'s top speed-event racer, against Austria's überskier Hermann Maier. **Packers at Eagles FOX 4 p.m.** | A rivalry that dates back to 1933.

MONDAY 6

***The Game of Their Lives* Sundance Channel 9 p.m.** | North Korea's 1966 defeat of the star-studded Italian soccer team may be the greatest upset in World Cup history. This heartwarming film has new interviews with members of that scrappy Korean squad.

TUESDAY 7

Jimmy V Classic: Oklahoma State vs. Syracuse ESPN 9 p.m. | A meeting of top point guards: the Orange's Gerry McNamara and OSU's John Lucas III. **In Stores: *Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story*** | A DVD extra shows how Ben Stiller and Vince Vaughn trained.

WEDNESDAY 8

1999 Women's World Cup Soccer Final U.S. vs. China ESPN Classic 8:30 p.m. | In front of 90,000 fans at the Rose Bowl, Brandi Chastain—wearing what would become the sports world's most famous undergarment—won the Cup for the U.S. with a penalty kick.

THURSDAY 9

Spurs at Rockets TNT 8 p.m. | A Texas-sized showdown. San Antonio has the league's third-best record thanks to 6′ 11″ power forward Tim Duncan, who's averaging 24.5 points and 12.9 rebounds. Can 7′ 6″ Houston center Yao Ming keep him away from the hoop?

Under Review

Forget political commentary and stuffy British dramas—we're approaching You Go, Girl! week on PBS. In the documentary *Girl Wrestler* (Dec. 14, 10 p.m.) 13-year-old Tara Neal of Austin is determined to pursue her sport even though John Rizzuti, president of the Texas Wrestling Officials Association, has declared, "Hell will freeze over before I officiate girls being brutalized by guys." Neal qualifies for several regional tournaments and goes on to the nationals in Fresno. But it's uncertain how long she'll compete since state law prohibits girls from wrestling boys after age 14, and girls' programs are rare.

Not so basketball. In *This Is a Game Ladies* (Dec. 16, 9 p.m.) we follow the Rutgers Scarlet Knights over the 2000–01 season, with coach C. Vivian Stringer at the helm. If Stringer, the only coach to lead three schools to the Final Four (Cheyney in 1982, Iowa in 1993, Rutgers in 2000), didn't invent tough love, she certainly advanced the concept. Slackers are kicked off the team, and a 19-point win over California is no cause to celebrate. But after her "ladies" defeat top-ranked Notre Dame 54–53, no one is happier. "How does it feel to beat Number 1?" Stringer yells, and suddenly the love doesn't seem so tough.

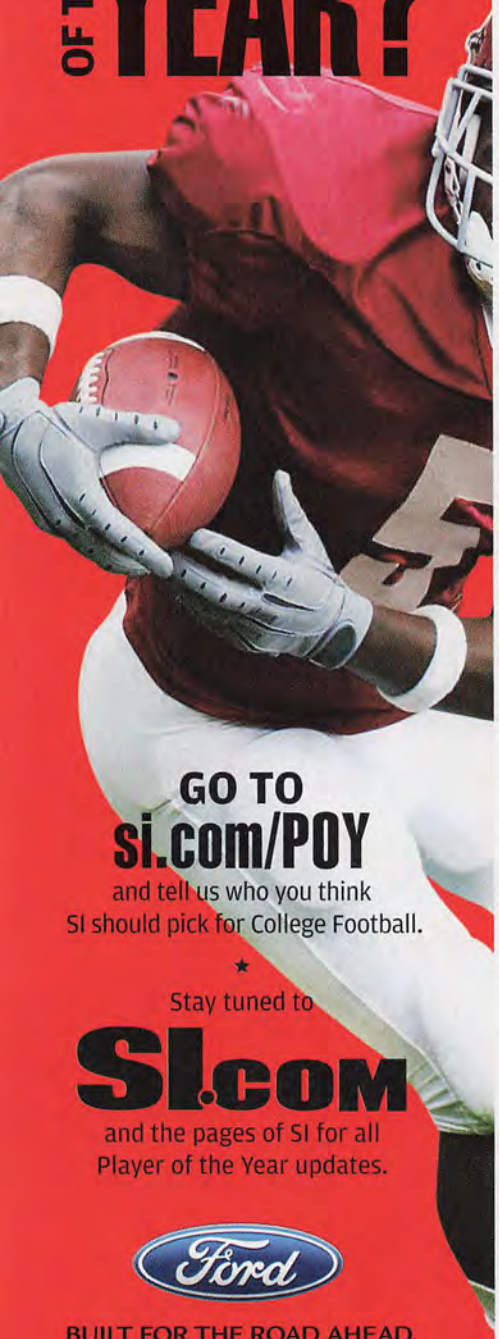
—Nancy Ramsey

©2004 FOX (BOXER); FRANK GUNN/AP (RAHLVES); FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT (DVD); LUCY NICHOLSON/REUTERS (DUNCAN); ROBERTO SCHMIDT/AFP (CHASTAIN); GREG BAKER/AP (WORLD CUP); SCOTT CLARKE/WIREIMAGE.COM (MCCANTS)

2004 JIMMY V CLASSIC
powered by PONTIAC
MEMPHIS vs. PITTSBURGH 7PM/ET
RODNEY CARNEY
CHRIS TAFT
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7TH
ESPN AVAILABLE ON ESPN HD
For more information and tickets, log on to www.jimmyv.org
OKLAHOMA ST. vs. SYRACUSE 9PM/ET
JOHN LUCAS
HAKIM WARRICK

WWW.PERRYELLIS.COM
PERRY ELLIS

WHO WILL BE THE NEXT
Sports Illustrated
PLAYER OF THE YEAR?



GO TO
si.com/POY
and tell us who you think
SI should pick for College Football.
★
Stay tuned to
SI.com
and the pages of SI for all
Player of the Year updates.

Ford
BUILT FOR THE ROAD AHEAD.
PROUD SPONSOR OF
Sports Illustrated SPORTSMAN of the YEAR
2004 AWARD CELEBRATION

Now on SI.com

Breaking news, scores, schedules and fresh, original Web-only stories and columns 24/7

Looking Ahead in College Football

Kelley King Hunts For Hidden Gems

YOU CAN'T blame NFL scouts for having a BCS bias. On the first day of the 2004 draft, just 11 of the 96 selections were plucked from mid-major or otherwise obscure schools. But the leader of that group—Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, out of Miami (Ohio)—is the league's likely offensive rookie of the year. The following senior standouts from smaller programs are trying to follow in Big Ben's footsteps in the 2005 draft.

1. Charlie Frye, QB, Akron By sticking around for his senior year, this 6' 4", 225-pound all-around talent boosted his career passing total to a school-record 11,049 yards—and also helped his draft stock.

2. Jamaal Brimmer, SS, UNLV His production has dipped slightly, but scouts love the instincts and aggressiveness of the Rebels' 6' 1" 210-pounder *(above)*.

3. Demarcus Ware, DE, Troy State A relentless pass rusher, the 6' 4", 233-pound Ware has pushed opponents back 100 yards on 17½ tackles for losses this season.

4. Michael Boley, LB, Southern Miss He's always around the ball—one of the reasons scouts admire the 6' 3", 220-pound Boley, the 2003 Conference USA defensive player of the year.

5. Kirk Morrison, LB, San Diego State The Aztecs' defensive anchor finished the season with 72 solo tackles, eighth-best in the NCAA.

6. Claude Terrell, OT, New Mexico Terrell has shown impressive versatility: After shifting from guard to tackle this season, he has 96 knockdown blocks.

7. Jim (Boomer) Grigsby, LB, Illinois State Boomer, who has a Division I-AA–record 580 career tackles, needs to heal fully from his Nov. 17 knee surgery to be drafted as early as originally projected.

8. Roddy White, WR, UAB White is big (6' 2", 205) and physical, and his 121.7 receiving yards average is the nation's second best this year.

▶ Read Kelley King's College Football Insider every Wednesday at SI.com/football/ncaa.

Stewart Mandel's Bowl Projections Who's going where in January.

Date	Bowl	Matchup
January 4	ORANGE	**USC** (BCS No. 1) *vs.* **Oklahoma** (BCS No. 2)
January 3	SUGAR	**Auburn** (SEC champ) *vs.* **Virginia Tech** (ACC champ)
January 1	FIESTA	**Utah** (BCS at large) *vs.* **Pittsburgh** (Big East champ)
January 1	ROSE	**Michigan** (Big 10 champ) *vs.* **Cal** (BCS at large)
January 1	CAPITAL ONE	**Iowa** (Big 10 No. 2) *vs.* **LSU** (SEC)
January 1	OUTBACK	**Wisconsin** (Big 10 No. 3) *vs.* **Georgia** (SEC)
January 1	GATOR	**Florida State** (ACC No. 2) *vs.* **West Virginia** (Big East No. 2)
January 1	COTTON	**Texas** (Big 12 No. 2) *vs.* **Tennessee** (SEC)

The Poll Position

If money were no object, which free agent would you sign?

○ Carlos Beltran ○ Adrian Beltre ○ Carlos Delgado ○ Pedro Martinez ○ Carl Pavano

Vote at **SI.com/baseball**. *Check back here next week for a new poll.*

DARREN HAUCK/ICON SMI

MODERN TRANSPORTATION. REMIXED.

Meet the totally new Ford Freestyle. It combines the things you love about a car, like great handling and fuel economy,* with the things you need from an SUV, like flexible room for people and cargo. The completely new Ford Freestyle. One vehicle. Endless possibilities. For more information visit fordvehicles.com.

MEET THE 2005 FREESTYLE

Built for the road ahead.

*EPA estimated 20 city/27 hwy mpg (front-wheel drive); 19 city/24 hwy mpg (all-wheel drive).

ADVERTISEMENT

Sports Illustrated
SPORTSMAN of the YEAR
2004
TRIVIA CHALLENGE
presented by
VIAGRA® (sildenafil citrate) tablets

Challenge yourself at
si.com/sportsmantrivia

Trivia Challenge Question

Which athletes are depicted on their Sportsman cover wearing togas?

Want more?
Take the rest of the challenge only at si.com/sportsmantrivia to see if your sports knowledge ranks among the best.

VIAGRA® (sildenafil citrate) is a proud sponsor of the

Sports Illustrated SPORTSMAN of the YEAR 2004 AWARD CELEBRATION

VIAGRA® and the blue diamond tablet shape are registered trademarks of Pfizer Inc.

Pfizer US Pharmaceuticals VG 2043611

Faces in the Crowd

Sarah Huffman

FLOWER MOUND, TEXAS > Soccer

Huffman, a junior midfielder at Virginia, helped lead the Cavaliers to a 17-3-2 season, including a school-record 14 shutouts, and their first Atlantic Coast Conference Championship. She was named ACC Tournament Co-MVP and conference defensive player of the year.

Pam Staton

FOX LAKE, ILL. > Football/Cross-country

Pam, a senior at Grant Community High, set school single-game and -season records for point-after attempts, going 7 for 8 and 32 for 36, respectively, as the kicker for the Bulldogs. She also won the North Suburban Conference cross-country individual championship.

Elfren Quiles

NEW BRITAIN, CONN. > Football

Quiles, a wide receiver at Merrimack College, caught 88 passes for 1,406 yards for the Warriors, an NCAA Division II freshman record. He led Division II with an average of 140.6 receiving yards and was Northeast-10 freshman of the year and First Team All-Conference.

Katie Potts

MILWAUKEE > Tennis

Katie, a senior at Divine Savior Holy Angels High, won her second straight Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association Division I championship. She led the Dashers to the team title and finished high school with a 24-match win streak and a 126–5 record.

Jeff See

MIDDLETOWN, OHIO > Cross-country

Jeff, a senior at Middletown High, ran 5,000 meters in 15:25 to lead the Middies to their first Ohio High School Athletic Association Division I Championship and win his second individual title. As a sophomore he set a national high school record in the mile (4:06.07).

Connor Dantzler

DAMASCUS, MD. > Powerlifting

Connor, a fifth-grader at Woodfield Elementary, won six gold medals (kids' division at 105 pounds and men's open division at 114) in the squat, bench press and deadlift at the AAU world championships. He also won his fourth state championship and holds 12 world, American and state records.

To submit a candidate for Faces in the Crowd, go to **SI.com/faces.**

FROM TOP: JIM CARPENTER; DAVID DUROCHIK/SPORTPICS; AL PEREIRA/ADVANCED PHOTO; DARREN HAUCK; DENNY LANDWEHR; DAVID DOYLE

See for yourself how the World's Toughest Off-Road Tires™ got that way.[1]

DUST TO GLORY

A major motion picture by Dana Brown

The heart-pounding film about the SCORE Baja 1000—the race BFGoodrich® tires have won 18 years straight. Watch the trailer[2] now at www.bfgoodrichtires.com/d2g.

©2004 MNA, Inc.

Call 1-800-525-0613 for a 2'(H)x3'(W) poster of these vehicles. $7.50 U.S. includes postage and handling.

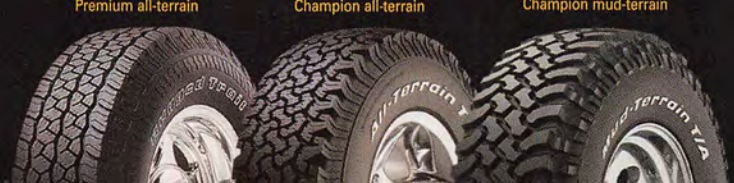
It's one thing to say you're tough. It's another to prove it 365 days a year under the toughest conditions imaginable. With technology we bring straight from the race trucks to your truck in every tire we sell. Because when the going gets tough—on-road or off—you need to know you've got it handled. BFGoodrich® tires. The world's toughest off-road tires.

1- From 1/1/04 through 7/31/04, BFGoodrich® tires won 147 of 190 major off-road competitions.
2- Dust to Glory title and trailer used with permission of IFC Films.

Rugged Trail T/A®
Premium all-terrain

All-Terrain T/A®KO
Champion all-terrain

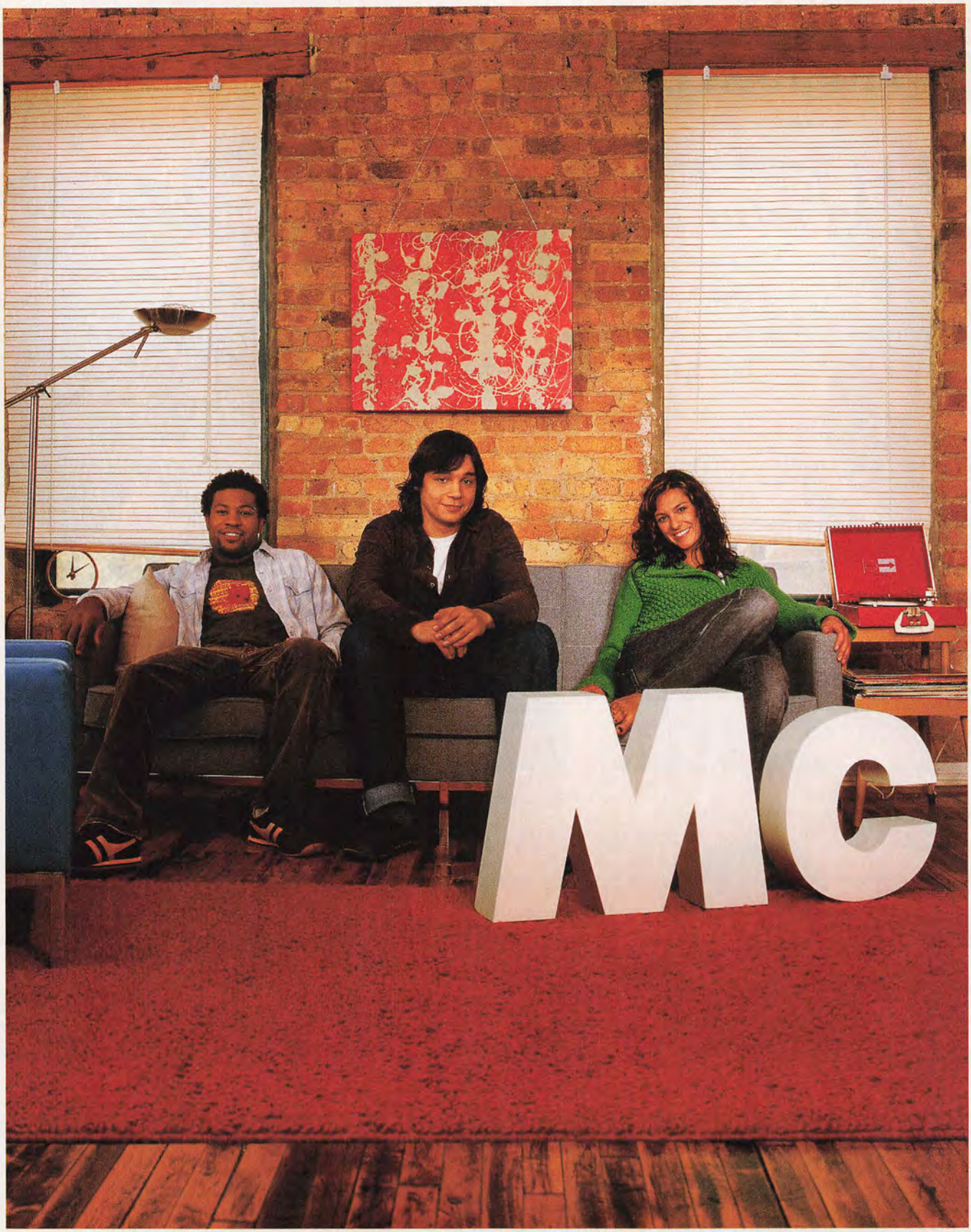
Mud-Terrain T/A®KM
Champion mud-terrain



BFGoodrich® Tires

TAKE CONTROL®

www.bfgoodrichtires.com



What does Mc® mean to me? Everything that I love. It's a big part of my favorite foods like Chicken McNuggets® or an Egg McMuffin® sandwich. Mc is a good time because it always brings us together. It reminds me of something delicious and dependable. To me, Mc means McDonald's.® So I'm cool with Mc and Mc is cool with me.

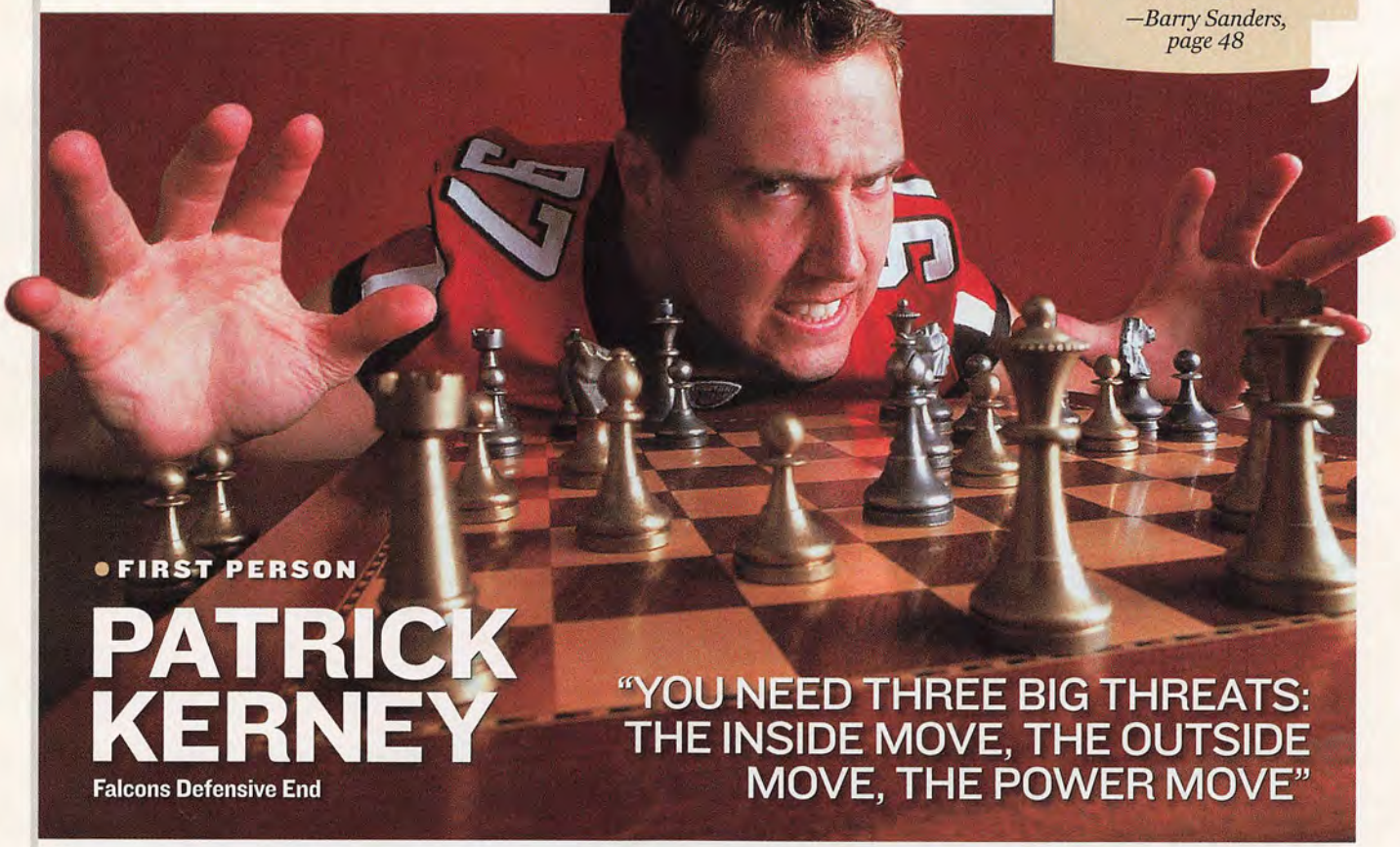
© 2004 McDonald's Corporation

i'm lovin' it™

Edited by
KOSTYA KENNEDY

SI Players

"It's good to be part of the Lions' family again."
—Barry Sanders, page 48



• FIRST PERSON

PATRICK KERNEY

Falcons Defensive End

"YOU NEED THREE BIG THREATS: THE INSIDE MOVE, THE OUTSIDE MOVE, THE POWER MOVE"

"• **ON BEING A DEFENSEMAN ON VIRGINIA'S 1996 NCAA FINALS LACROSSE TEAM** I came from a big lacrosse area near Philadelphia, so it was my pathway to a good school. I loved lacrosse. Nothing is comparable to the passion you feel on a Sunday morning, getting ready to go out and play an NFL game. But lacrosse is close.

• **ON WHICH IS THE TOUGHER GAME** Football. But lacrosse is pretty macho. You'd rather get your shoulder broken than wear big shoulder pads.

• **ON HIS EMERGENCE AS AN ELITE PASS RUSHER** I feel like the CEO of a great company. I'm getting the attention, but I'm surrounded by good people. We're playing with each other, not as individuals.

• **ON THE KEY TO DEFENSIVE END PLAY** You've got to have the three big threats—the inside move, the outside move, the power move. If you don't have any one of those, you'll lose a lot more than you win.

• **ON BEATING TACKLES** It's all mental. It's a chess match. Sometimes you get him to buy a certain move you're doing the whole game. Then you change up on him. When we played the Rams this year, I kept showing power, power, power against [right tackle] Grant Williams. Finally, on their last play, I came back outside and beat the block. I got a quick hit on Marc Bulger, and he threw incomplete. That's when you know your strategy worked.

• **ON OTHER METHODS OF DUPING** Our defense runs stunts a lot. [Ends and tackles switch positions at the snap.] When I'm talking with my defensive tackle before the play, I want the offensive tackle to wonder if we're going to stunt. Sometimes we do, sometimes it's a phony call.

• **ON WHETHER THE SACK IS AN OVERRATED STAT** I think so. We always say to earn the right to rush the passer, you've got to play the run. Look at an NFL sack reel for the whole season. I'd say 15 percent of the time it's a pure, beat-your-man-to-the-quarterback pass rush. The rest of the time, maybe he leaves the pocket and you chase him, or you just find yourself right near him. A great defensive end has to be great against the run.

• **ON THE GREATEST PLACE HE'S WATCHED A SPORTING EVENT** Fenway Park. The history, the aura. You feel it when you walk into the place. I went this year and sat in the Monster seats on the left-field wall. They were beating the crap out of the Devil Rays. I'm not a big baseball guy, but that place turns me on."

—As told to Peter King

THE 6′ 5″, 273-POUND KERNEY IS SECOND IN THE NFC WITH 8½ SACKS. THE FALCONS (9–2) PLAY AT TAMPA BAY (4–7) ON SUNDAY

AL MESSERSCHMIDT/WIREIMAGE.COM (SANDERS)

PHOTOGRAPH BY GREG FOSTER

Timberland® Make it better.™

Cold can't get your feet if cold can't find them.

Two ways to keep warm in the cold: keep moving and dress in layers. You can do both in our new high-perfomance Snow Lizard. It features special Snow Bob and perimeter cleats to propel you on ice and snow plus a water-repellent, breathable Power Shield® outer shell. Zip it up to keep the cold from finding your fast-moving feet.

Timberland, and Make it better are trademarks or registered trademarks of The Timberland Company. ©2004 The Timberland Company. All rights reserved. **Shop anytime at timberland.com**

WHO'S Hot

Quincy Carter

When does a two-game average of 125 passing yards make you hot in these gunslingin' times? When those yards lead to back-to-back wins for a Jets QB who was abruptly released by the Cowboys in August and who rebounded after being knocked ga-ga and missing three series on Sunday. Carter's Jets are 8–3 and have three of their next four at home. Did we mention the Boys are 4–7 without him?

Burgers

With the Steelers 10–0 under Big Ben, Pittsburgh's Peppi's is selling T-shirts ($11.95) reading, I TACKLED THE ROETHLISBURGER, in honor of its 1½-pound meat-eggs-and-cheese concoction. More fun-on-a-bun: Bills coach Mike Mularkey had his team eat cheeseburgers last Saturday to change its luck out West. Buffalo then trounced Seattle 38–9.

Schottenheimers

Marty's the odds-on choice for coach of the year after his Chargers beat his former team, the Chiefs, 34–31 on Sunday. Son Brian (San Diego's QB coach) missed the game but still helped deliver a winner: His wife, Gemmi, had the couple's first child on Saturday. Baby Sutton Schottenheimer got the game ball from Grandpa.

AFC

After going 4–1 versus the NFC on Sunday, the Awfully Fine Conference is 32–18 overall in interleague games. A 7–4 record (Broncos, Ravens) puts you on the playoff bubble.

Nicolette Sheridan

This year's *Monday Night* towel girl—who in the '80s amazed us on *Battle of the Network Stars* and *Knots Landing*—survived after oddsmakers had her at 2 to 1 to get bumped off in Sunday's *Desperate Housewives*. Hey, Nicolette: TO's back on *MNF* on Dec. 27.

WHO'S Not

Redskins

One month after Election Day, D.C. is in a blue state. Coach Gibbs is fending off talk he'll (re)retire, and stud tailback Clinton Portis *(left)* is inexplicably being phased out of an offense (12.6 points per game) that could barely outscore D.C. United. After Sunday's 16–7 loss to Pittsburgh dropped the Skins to 3–8, QB Patrick Ramsey sighed, "It's the same old story."

Alexanders

Days after a headline dubbed him ALEXANDER THE GREAT, Seattle's $3.25 million-a-year back Shaun Alexander gained just 39 yards in loss to Bills. Days after a headline dubbed it BARELY EVEN MEDIOCRE, Oliver Stone's $155 million *Alexander* brought in just $13.4 million over long Thanksgiving weekend.

Dennis Green

Cardinals coach says, "When I make a decision, I stay with it until I change my mind," and his indecisiveness on QBs (McCown to King to McCown, etc.) has helped sink Arizona to third place in NFC West. On Sunday, he watched two guys he let go—Jets guard Pete Kendall and CB David Barrett—celebrate on Arizona's turf.

NFC

Can't beat the AFC and can't escape mediocrity. In the Nobody's Forgotten Conference, teams like Green's Cards and the once 1–7 Panthers have a shot at the playoffs.

Martin Gramatica

Day after turning 29, he blew three kicks, costing Bucs a game. Worse, loss was to Panthers and archenemy Todd Sauerbrun (SI, Nov. 29). Coach Jon Gruden said he wouldn't "address how I truly feel" about Gramatica's play. Sauerbrun did: "I'd be surprised if he wasn't gone tomorrow."

SI PLAYERS POLL

Based on a survey of 354 players

For complete results and a breakdown of the poll go to SI.com/scorecard.

What is the toughest place to play in December?

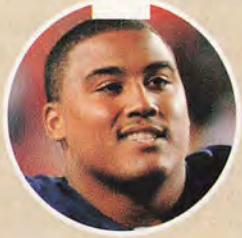
Green Bay *Lambeau Field*	**44%**
Foxborough *Gillette Stadium*	21%
Buffalo *Ralph Wilson Stadium*	11%
Chicago *Soldier Field*	6%

FAST FACTS: Since '92 the Packers are 31–3 in home games played after Nov. 30. They host the Lions and the Jaguars this month. . . . Despite a 17–31 record from '01 through '03, the Bills are 5–2 in December home games in that time. They host Cleveland next week. . . . Seventeen cities—including Phoenix—got at least one vote.

JAMIE MULLEN/WIREIMAGE.COM (CARTER); BRIAN KILLIAN/WIREIMAGE.COM (PORTIS); JAAP BUITENDIJK/WARNER BROS./PHOTOFEST (FARRELL); WARNER HOME VIDEO (GRAMATICA); MIKE ROEMER/AP (LAMBEAU); FREDERICK M. BROWN/GETTY IMAGES (SHERIDAN); JOHN BIEVER (ROETHLISBERGER)

The Questions with Dwan Edwards

Ravens Defensive Tackle



What was your welcome-to-the-NFL moment? The first time I went against [Baltimore's 6′ 7″, 360-pound tackle] Orlando Brown in practice. You line up against a guy like Zeus, and you had better have your technique down and go as hard as you can, or you'll get hurt.

Most embarrassing moment? They called me Big Circus at Oregon State. Me and some friends went to a circus with some girls. We got our picture taken, and it wound up on this girl's refrigerator. One of the guys on the team saw it, and they tried to embarrass me about it. The nickname stuck all through college, like I love the circus so much I went every day.

Favorite off-day activity? I love going to the movies, like when I saw *Collateral*. It's good. I can vouch for it.

If I weren't in the NFL, I'd be . . . "I have my business degree, so I would have gotten an internship."

Last Week

Edwards and the Ravens lost 24–3 in the New England mud.

This Week

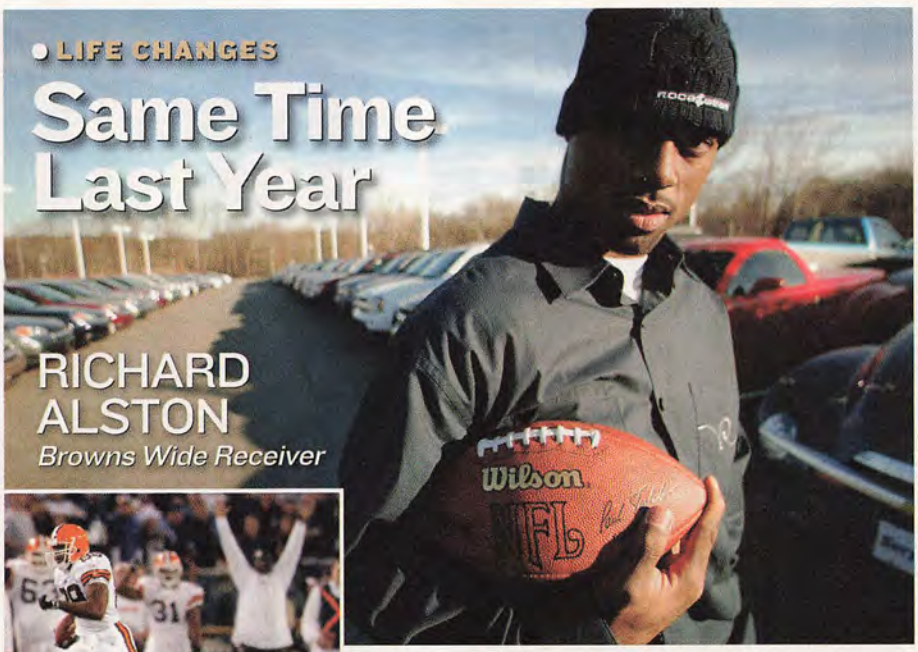
Baltimore hosts Cincinnati, including Edwards's former Oregon State teammates receivers T.J. Houshmandzadeh and Chad Johnson and cornerbacks Terrell Roberts and Dennis Weathersby.

• LIFE CHANGES

Same Time Last Year

RICHARD ALSTON

Browns Wide Receiver



YOU MIGHT say Browns kick returner Richard Alston—who averages 23.8 yards per kickoff return and broke off a 93-yard TD romp against the Ravens on Nov. 7 *(left)*—has one good set of wheels. But last season he had about a hundred good sets—and no connection to football. After being cut by the Browns in August 2003, Alston picked up the paper and looked for a job. An ad for a salesman at a used-car dealership near Alston's brother's house in Zebulon, N.C., piqued Alston's interest, and the East Carolina alum was quickly hired. He proved a natural, selling about 15 cars a week, but he wasn't long for the lot. Last March the Browns offered him a spot in NFL Europe with the Berlin Thunder. Alston helped the Thunder win the league title with 481 receiving yards and six TDs, and when he was invited back to Browns camp this year, the 5′ 11″ 215-pounder survived the cuts, leaving him to think back fondly on his automotive career. "I met so many interesting people," he says. "I would use football as an icebreaker, and before you knew it, we would be chatting like old friends and I would sell them a car. It was a win-win situation." *—Lisa Altobelli*

• STUFF HAPPENS

Feeling REJECTED

Expert advice from a newly booted punter

Rough Thanksgiving weekend for Sean Landeta, who was sent packing by the Rams last Friday. Yet Landeta, the busiest punter in NFL history (1,367 punts for 59,224 yards), took it in stride, saying he'd keep his 42-year-old body ready to get back into the league. After playing for seven teams in his 23-season USFL and NFL career, Landeta has learned to cope with being cut, as he told SI Players earlier this fall.

"The best way to deal with rejection is to understand why something didn't go the way you wanted it to and then to realize that it's probably not that bad. The hardest time was in '97. I had been cut by the Rams, and when the season started, I wasn't playing. I was pretty depressed. Once I was playing again [the Bucs signed him on Oct. 9 that year], I told myself that if that ever happened again, I'd never allow myself to be as down as I was. It made me see how many players can fall into a downward spiral, when in reality their life is just fine. As you get older, it's so much easier to deal with rejection because you see that, for the most part, whatever didn't work out isn't really that important."

GEORGE BRIDGES/ABACA (EDWARDS); STEVE BESLICH/NEWSDAY/KRT/ABACA (ALSTON ACTION); THOMAS E. WITTE (ALSTON); TOM CAMMETT/WIREIMAGE.COM (LANDETA)

Sport is EVOLVING.

Presenting the rarest breed of sports show to emerge from your television. Only on NBC.

Jeep World OF ADVENTURE SPORTS

Energizer

NBC Sports

Jeep

Jeep is a registered trademark of DaimlerChrysler Corporation.

GARMIN.

www.WorldofAdventureSports.com

Columbia Sportswear Company.

An Aura360 Property

The new Schick Quattro Midnight works like you. Day and night.

Introducing the new Schick Quattro Midnight. 4 blades. 2 conditioning strips. 1 smooth face.

• THREADS

One Sharp Patriot

Richard Seymour is the best dressed player on the NFL's best team

AT 6' 6" AND 310 pounds, Patriots defensive tackle Richard Seymour often has trouble finding clothes to fit his frame. So he calls on Jonathan Smith, a Myrtle Beach, S.C., designer, to custom-make the bulk of his wardrobe. "He'll fly in with a bunch of swatches and we'll collaborate on different looks," says Seymour of Smith, whom he met in 2001. "Plus, he has all my suits on file so he'll never make me something similar to what I already have."

Smith, 46, whose company is called Bespoke Carolina, has had more than 120 NFL clients for his suits, which range from $800 to $1,800. "Deion [Sanders] told me once, 'If you look good, you feel good. If you feel good, you play good,' " says Smith. Seymour, 25, a two-time All-Pro out of Georgia, has done both. "Richard is not flashy, but he doesn't want to look like he just walked out of Wall Street," says Smith. "He likes his clothes to have a little flavor." —*Lisa Altobelli*

[MR. CASUAL]
For a more relaxed look, Seymour wears a French cuff shirt ($295) with a slipknot cufflink, over a plain white T-shirt and a pair of Sean John jeans ($70–$80). He also favors $165 brown Bacco Bucci shoes. ("The most comfortable shoes I've ever worn," he says) and a Breitling watch. "Richard is the first NFL client I made this shirt for, and now I have guys asking for 15 or 20 at a time," says Smith. "It has just enough flair with the coordinating design on the cuff and inside collar to not be boring, but it's casual enough to wear with jeans."

[SUIT]
Charcoal brown with pink pinstripes over a custom-made dusty rose cotton shirt with a white Euro-spread collar. "I like classic clean lines with a little bit of edge," says Seymour. "I like to make a statement in a suit, rather than have the suit make the statement."

[JEWELRY]
"I have two wedding bands," says Seymour, who married wife Tanya in May. "One with diamonds, one everyday platinum band. I also have a dog tag with my number between my little sister's name [CeCe] and my son's [R.J.]."

[ACCESSORIES]
Pink tie, pink cufflinks, pink pocket square. Says Smith, "I add all the accessories so it's completely a turnkey. He won't have to think about what he needs to complete the look. He just needs to add shoes and go."

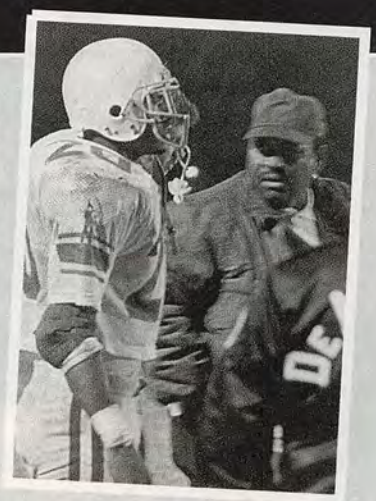
[SHOES]
Brown Mezlan Alligator/Ostrich loafers ($650). "My favorite is a square-toe black shoe, but for a dressier look, I'll wear gators," Seymour says. "The bigger the shoes, the more expensive they get. Unfortunately, I'm a size 17."

The Man . . . WHO INFLUENCED ME

Richie Anderson, *Dallas Cowboys Fullback*

LANNIE SEYMOUR, my football coach at Sherwood High in Sandy Spring, Md., was always giving me advice. I'd be walking down a hallway, and he'd stroll past just to say something profound. He had one phrase that still sticks with me today: 'Don't let Mary Schoolhouse get you in trouble.' I didn't know what that one meant for a long time, but it hit me one day while I was at Penn State. I suddenly realized he was warning me that chasing girls could keep me from taking care of my business.

Coach Seymour made me realize I could be somebody, even though there weren't many successful people coming out of my neighborhood. He even talked me out of transferring from Sherwood after my sophomore year. I wanted to go to a different school because nobody else had succeeded there, so I didn't expect to be any different. Coach came to my house and told me, 'It's not where you go; it's what you do that matters.' I decided to stay at Sherwood, and it was the right move. I was an All-America as a senior. Then I went to Penn State and was drafted in the sixth round by the Jets in 1993. Looking back on my career has made me realize that the most important moment in my life was the day Coach Seymour walked into it.



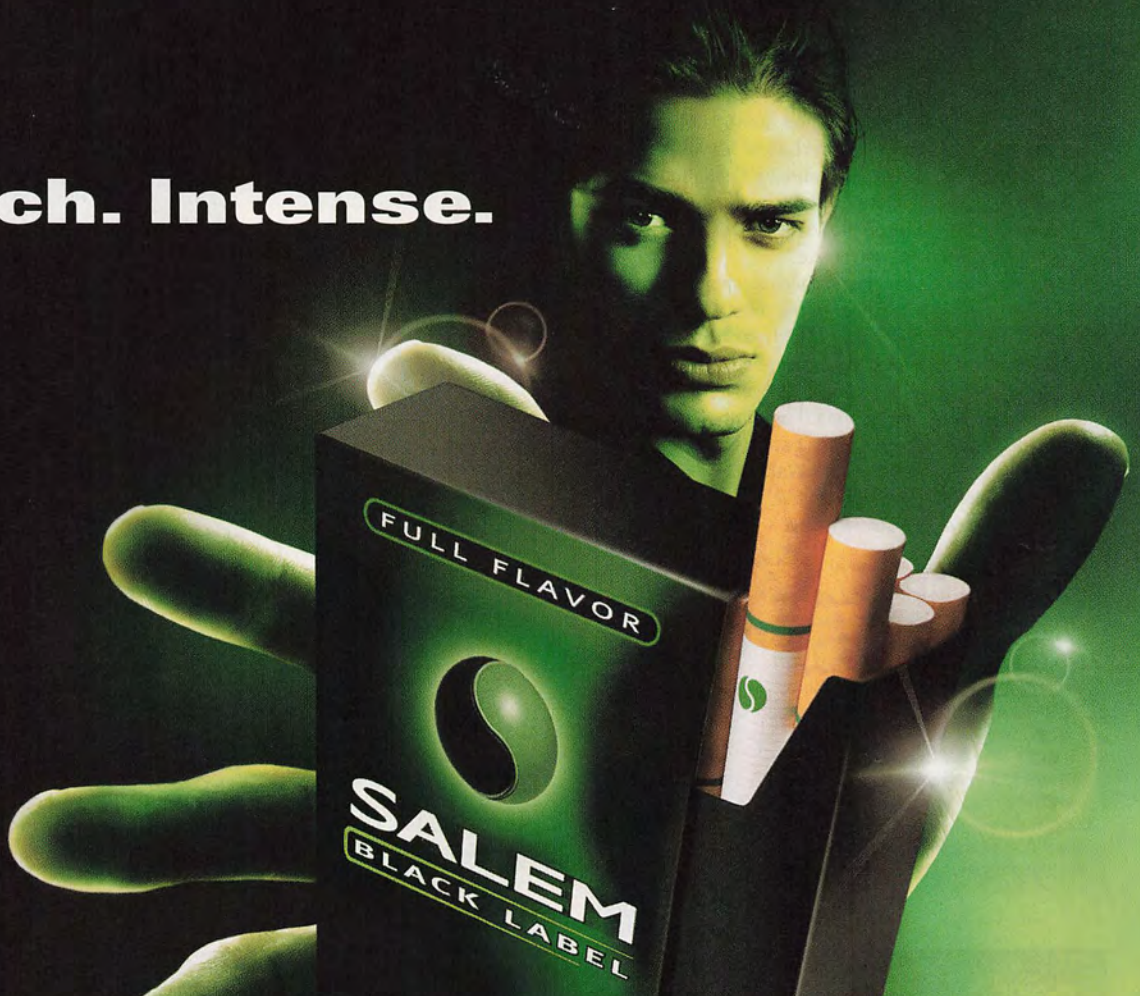
JASON GROW (SEYMOUR 2); COURTESY OF LANNIE SEYMOUR; RAFAEL SUANES/WIREIMAGE.COM (ANDERSON ACTION)

Visit www.salemaccess.com. Website restricted to smokers 21 or older.
Black Label may not be available in all areas.

BLACK LABEL FULL FLAVOR 17 mg. "tar", 1.2 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method. For more product information, visit www.rjrt.com.

©2004 R.J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO.

Rich. Intense.



BLACK LABEL

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Quitting Smoking Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health.

SALEM

stir the senses

•NFL ROAD MAP: INDIANAPOLIS

Peyton Place

Twenty years after they came over on the Mayflower (moving vans), the Colts are happily part of the Hoosier landscape

585 MILES EAST
Philadelphia, Tasty Baking Company. In the late '90s, WR and Philly native Marvin Harrison had 30 packages of Tastykakes—and the *Philadelphia Daily News*—delivered to his house every week.

763 MILES SW
Dallas, SMU. Alma mater of former Colts running back Eric Dickerson and Colts owner Jim Irsay—who played a season at linebacker. During a '90 contract dispute Dickerson claimed Robert Irsay, Jim's dad, had him fly "2,000 miles . . . to talk in circles for 10 minutes." Dickerson was shipped to Oakland in '92.

1,024 MILES SSE
Miami, team's birthplace. The All-America Football Conference's Miami Seahawks relocated to Baltimore in 1946, then Indianapolis in 1984.

1,028 MILES SSE
Coral Gables, Hecht Athletic Center, University of Miami. A $250,000 donation from ex-Hurricane, current Colt Edgerrin James in 2000—then the largest to the athletic department—went toward a weight room and the Edgerrin James Team Meeting Room.

1,023 MILES SSE
Miami Beach, Surf Club. Where Peyton Manning unofficially became the Colts' first pick in '98. After accepting a breakfast invite from team owner Jim Irsay nine days before the draft, Manning looked him in the eyes and promised, "I'll win for you." Irsay later said, "I knew then he was the guy I wanted."

405 MILES NE
Hamilton, Ont., Ivor Wynne Stadium. Filming locale of 1998 Tony Danza made-for-TV snoozer *The Garbage Picking Field Goal Kicking Philadelphia Phenomenon.* Danza's body double: Colts kicker Mike Vanderjagt.

Visitors' View

The Titans talk about what they like to do in Indianapolis

When I was drafted by Indianapolis [in 1994], they were revamping downtown. They made the mall called Circle Centre and put in restaurants. When I go back I like to see how the place has grown. They've got a nice little Johnny Rockets. I go there and have a nice little cheeseburger. *—Jason Mathews, tackle*

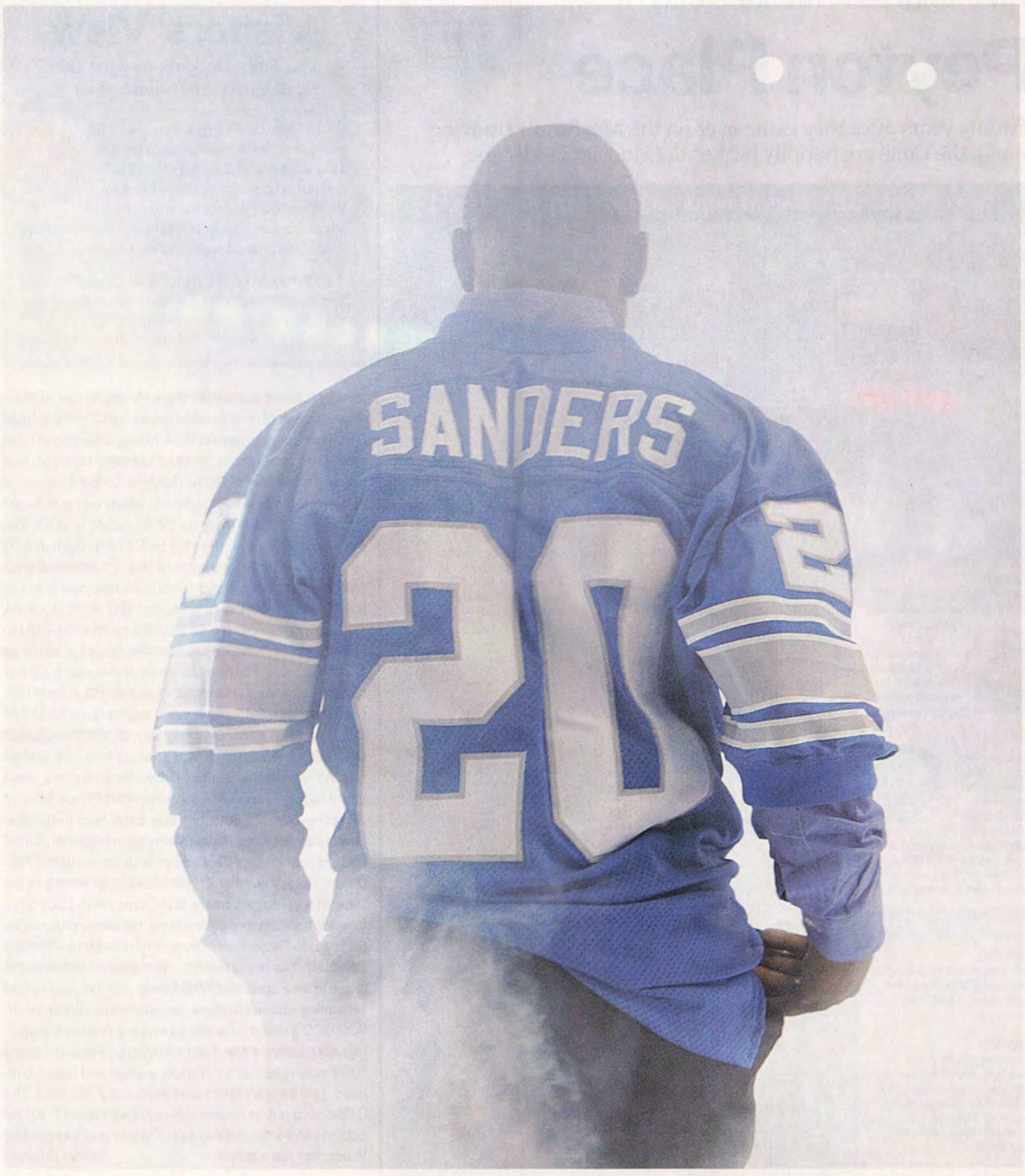
"I go for a run on the morning of the game, and I like going through the new downtown, running past the ballpark and down by the river."
—Jeff Fisher, head coach

[1] MAYFLOWER BUSINESS PARK Headquarters of Mayflower Transit when it handled secret, middle-of-the-night Baltimore-to-Indy move in 1984. Now a collection of retail stores and restaurants. **[2] LILLY LIBRARY** Home of Jack Kerouac's first draft of *On the Road* (ten 12-foot-long sheets of paper Scotch-taped together), which was purchased by Colts owner Jim Irsay for $2.43 million in 2001. The manuscript is now on the road (in Rome through Jan. 7) as part of a 16-city international tour. **[3] INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY** World-famous 2½-mile oval is site of Indy 500 and NASCAR's Brickyard 400. A 4K racetrack run/walk on Nov. 6 raised $8,500 for the Pat Tillman Foundation. **[4] HALL OF CHAMPIONS** Mecca of all things NCAA displays a banner for each of the year's 88 national champions. **[5] CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL** Host of NFL combine since 1987; players and league brass fill all 273 rooms for three nights each February. **[6] VAPOUR LOUNGE** Giants QB, *Bachelor* alum Jesse Palmer frequents it when he's in town visiting family. ("Drives the girls crazy," says chef Matthew Lane.) At now suspended Pacers forward Jermaine O'Neal's 26th-birthday party here in October guests included Colts Peyton Manning and Edgerrin James, and the lounge was decked out with ice-sculpted 7s—O'Neal's jersey number. **[7] SHULA'S STEAK HOUSE** In the Westin hotel across from the RCA Dome. Many Colts come to tackle the 48-ounce porterhouse "because it's the macho thing to do," says hotel director of operations Garfield Campbell. "Not many finish it." **[8] CONSECO FIELDHOUSE** Home of the Pacers and WNBA Fever. For this year's world swimming championships, fire department pumped in 300,000 gallons of water to make a temporary pool. **[9] EAGLE CREEK PARK** Tight end Marcus Pollard trolls the 1,350-acre reservoir for crappie, walleye and largemouth bass. **[10] BRICKYARD CROSSING GOLF COURSE** The 6,994-yard public course includes four holes (7–10) inside the Motor Speedway oval. Pollard and kicker Mike Vanderjagt are regulars. *—Adam Duerson*

11 RCA DOME

- FOOTBALL CAPACITY: 55,506, lowest in NFL
- LARGEST HOOPS CROWD: 67,596 (for U.S. Olympic Dream Team vs. NBA All-Stars in 1984)
- RETIRED COLTS NUMBERS ON DISPLAY: 19 (John Unitas), 22 (Buddy Young), 24 (Lenny Moore), 70 (Art Donovan), 77 (Jim Parker), 82 (Raymond Berry), 89 (Gino Marchetti)
- GAMES PLAYED IN INDY BY THOSE PLAYERS: Zero
- FINAL FOURS HOSTED: Three (1991, '97, 2000). Scheduled to host again in '06 and '10
- COST OF CONSTRUCTION IN 1984: $77.5 million
- ANNUAL GUESTS: approximately 1.5 million

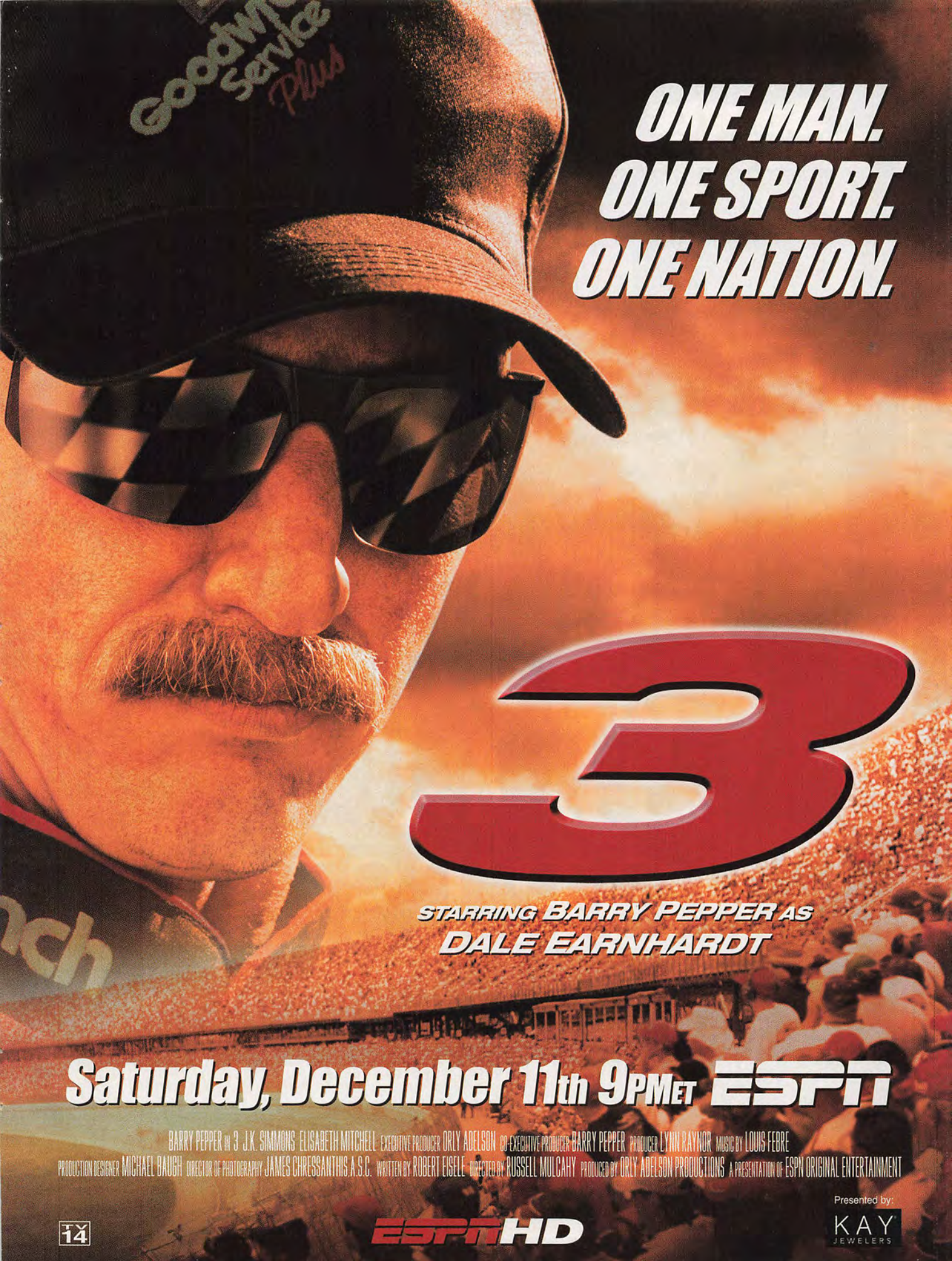
MAP BY STEVE STANKIEWICZ; ALAN SCHEIN/CORBIS (TRUCK); BOB D'AMICO/ABC (PALMER); BILL FRAKES (FISHING); DISNEY STUDIOS (DANZA); MEL LEVINE (TASTYKAKES); JONATHAN FERREY/GETTY IMAGES (INDY CAR); CORBIS (MEAT); NCAA HALL OF CHAMPIONS (SCULPTURE); HERALD EXAMINER/AP (DICKERSON); JEFF CHIU/AP (MANNING); PENGUIN BOOKS (ON THE ROAD); SCOTT BOEHM/GETTY IMAGES (DOME); A.J. MAST/ICON SMI (FEVER)



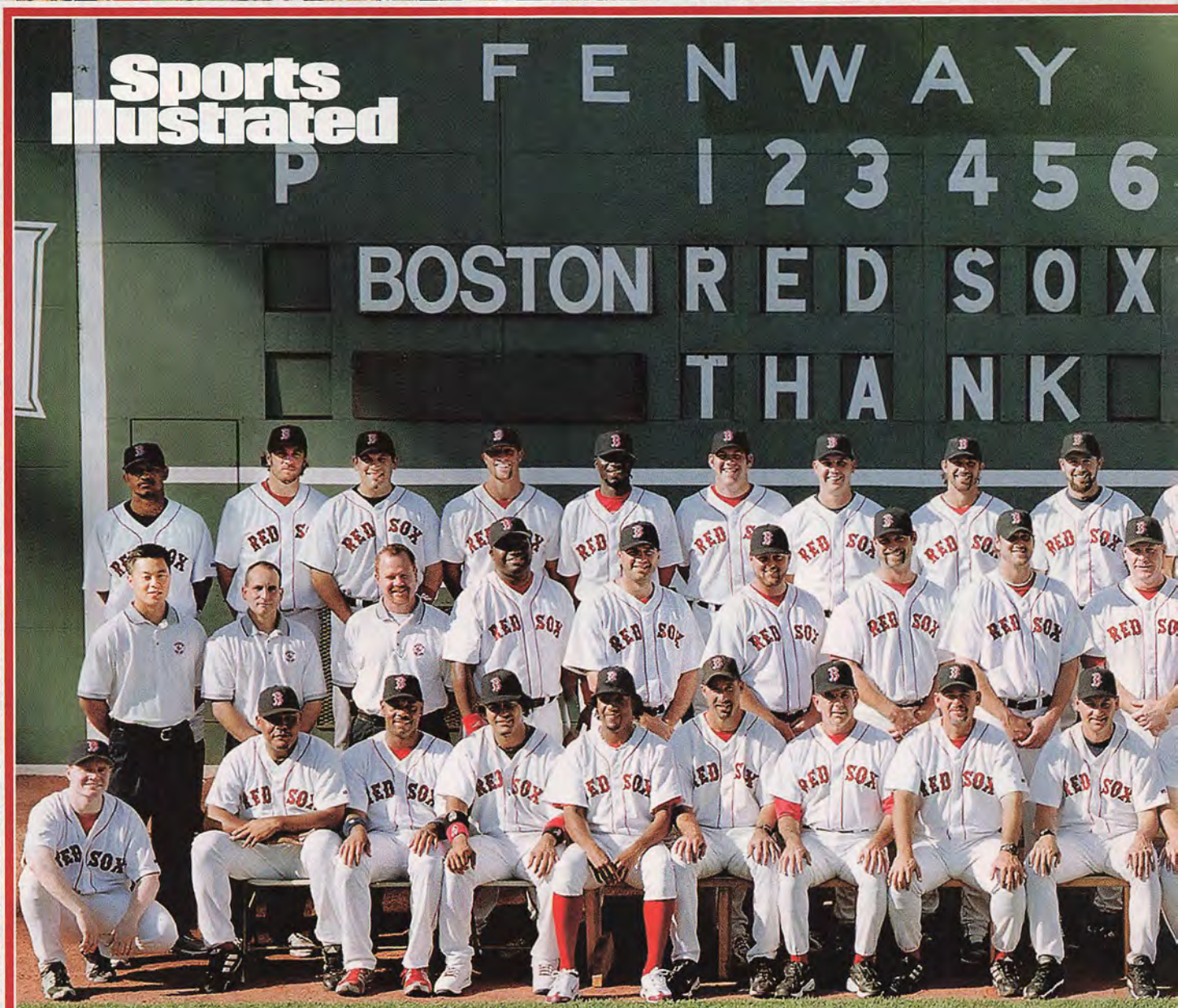
Lion-Hearted

PHOTOGRAPH BY
RON SCHEFFLER/US PRESSWIRE

MUCH MIST When he walked away from the NFL at age 30 in 1998, Barry Sanders didn't apologize or explain. He wasn't angry though; after rushing for 15,269 yards, he was just finished with football. And now, after being inducted into the Hall of Fame this year, Sanders, who ranks third in rushing alltime, appears to be finished with his separation from the game. On Thanksgiving, before the Colts beat the Lions 41–9, he took the field with fellow Detroit greats Billy Sims and Lem Barney for a ceremony to retire the number 20 that each player wore. Said Sanders, "It's good to be part of the Lions' family again."


ONE MAN.
ONE SPORT.
ONE NATION.
3
STARRING BARRY PEPPER AS
DALE EARNHARDT
Saturday, December 11th 9PM ET ESPN
BARRY PEPPER IN 3 J.K. SIMMONS ELISABETH MITCHELL EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ORLY ADELSON CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER BARRY PEPPER PRODUCER LYNN RAYNOR MUSIC BY LOUIS FEBRE
PRODUCTION DESIGNER MICHAEL BAUGH DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES CHRESSANTHIS A.S.C. WRITTEN BY ROBERT EISELE DIRECTED BY RUSSELL MULCAHY PRODUCED BY ORLY ADELSON PRODUCTIONS A PRESENTATION OF ESPN ORIGINAL ENTERTAINMENT
TV 14
ESPN HD
Presented by:
KAY JEWELERS

Sports Illustrated



SPORTSMEN

The 2004 Boston Red Sox staged the most improbable comeback in baseball history and liberated their long-suffering nation of fans

BY TOM VERDUCCI

Photograph by Julie Cordeiro/Boston Red Sox

OF THE YEAR

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY/AP

WAIT NO MORE Much has changed since 1918 (inset), but after a mere 86 years, the Sox are champs again.

THE CANCER would have killed most men long ago, but not George Sumner. The Waltham, Mass., native had served three years aboard the USS *Arkansas* in World War II, raised six kids with a hell of a lot more love than the money that came from fixing oil burners, and watched from his favorite leather chair in front of the television—except for the handful of times he had the money to buy bleacher seats at Fenway—his Boston Red Sox, who had found a way not to win the World Series in every one of the 79 years of his life. George Sumner knew something about persistence. ¶ The doctors and his family thought they had lost George last Christmas Day, more than two years after the diagnosis. Somehow George pulled through. And soon, though still sick and racked by the chemo, the radiation and the trips in and out of hospitals for weeks at a time, George was saying, "You know what? With Pedro and Schilling we've got a pretty good staff this year. Please let this be the year." ¶ On the night of Oct. 13, 2004, George Sumner knew he was running out of persistence. The TV in his room at Newton-Wellesley Hospital was showing Pedro Martinez and the Red Sox losing to the New York Yankees in Game 2 of the American League Championship Series—this after Boston had lost Game 1 behind Curt Schilling. During commercial breaks Sumner talked with his daughter Leah about what to do with his personal possessions. Only a few days earlier his wife, Jeanne, had told him, "If the pain is too much, George, it's O.K. if you want to go."

But Leah knew how much George loved the Red Sox, saw how closely he still watched their games and understood that her father, ever quick with a smile or a joke, was up to something.

"Dad, you're waiting around to see if they go to the World Series, aren't you?" she said. "You really want to see them win it, right?"

A sparkle flickered in the sick man's eyes and a smile creased his lips.

"Don't tell your mother," he whispered.

At that moment, 30 miles away in Weymouth, Mass., Jaime Andrews stewed about the Red Sox' losing again but found some relief in knowing that he might be spared the conflict he had feared for almost nine months. His wife, Alice, was due to give birth on Oct. 27. Game 4 of the World Series was scheduled for that night. Jamie was the kind of tortured fan who could not watch when the Red Sox were protecting a lead late in the game, because of a chronic, aching certainty that his team would blow it again.

Rooting for the Red Sox is, as evident daily in the OBITUARY PAGES, a life's definitive calling.

COMPLETE GAME Jeanne and Leah thought they had lost George before the season, but he lived to see Foulke and Varitek celebrate the final out.

Oh, well, James thought as he watched the Red Sox lose Game 2, at least now I won't have to worry about my team in the World Series when my baby is born.

Dear Red Sox:
My boyfriend is a lifelong Red Sox fan. He told me we'll get married when the Red Sox win the World Series. . . . I watched every pitch of the playoffs.
—SIGNED BY A BRIDE-TO-BE

THE MOST emotionally powerful words in the English language are monosyllabic: love, hate, born, live, die, sex, kill, laugh, cry, want, need, give, take, Sawx.

The Boston Red Sox are, of course, a civic religion in New England. As grounds crew workers tended to the Fenway Park field last summer after a night game, one of them found a white plastic bottle of holy water in the outfield grass. There was a handwritten message on the side: GO SOX. The team's 2003 highlight film, punctuated by the crescendo of the walk-off home run by the Yankees' Aaron Boone in ALCS Game 7, was christened, *Still, We Believe.*

"We took the wording straight out of the Catholic canon," club president Larry Lucchino says. "It's not *We Still Believe.* Our working slogan for next year is *It's More than Baseball. It's the Red Sox.*"

Rooting for the Red Sox is, as evident daily in the obituary pages, a life's definitive calling. Every day all over New England, and sometimes beyond, death notices include age, occupation, parish and allegiance to the Sox. Charles F. Brazeau, born in North Adams, Mass., and an Army vet who was awarded a Purple Heart in World War II, lived his entire 85 years without seeing the Red Sox win a world championship, though barely so. When he passed on in Amarillo, Texas, just two days before Boston won the 2004 World Series, the *Amarillo Globe News* eulogized him as a man who "loved the Red Sox and cheap beer."

Rest in peace.

Alice was not happy that Jaime worried at all about the possible conflict between the birth and the Sox. She threatened to bar him from the delivery room if Boston was playing that night. "Pathetic," she called his obsession with his team.

"It's not my fault," Jaime would plead, and then fall on the DNA defense. "It was passed down through generations, from my grandfather to my mother to me."

PETER GREGOIRE (TOP); ROBERT BECK; BORDER PHOTOS FROM PHOTOMOSAIC BY ROBERT SILVERS/WWW.PHOTOMOSAIC.COM (PHOTOS BY SPORTS ILLUSTRATED/AP/GETTY IMAGES)

THE 100 POINT GAME.

THE 48 TOUCHDOWN YEAR.

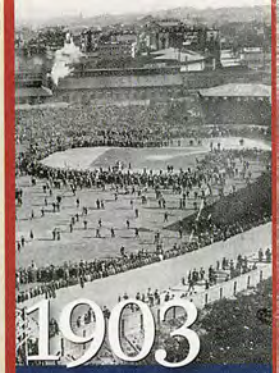
THE 73 HOME RUN SEASON.

1901

Funded by Cleveland entrepreneur Charles Somers, **THE BOSTON AMERICANS** join the fledgling American League. Third baseman Jimmy Collins, the first player signed by the new franchise, serves as player-manager.

>1901

Thirty-four-year-old CY YOUNG goes 33–10 in his first season with Boston, leading the league in wins.



1903

Boston defeats the Pittsburgh Pirates five games to three to win the first World Series.

932

Sox first baseman **DALE XANDER** hits .367 to win AL batting title, but Boston s a team-record 111 games.

>1933

Thirty-year-old millionaire TOM YAWKEY purchases the Red Sox and invests $1.5 million in repairing Fenway Park.

1934

With a 37-foot leftfield wall made from 30,000 pounds of Toncan iron, a remodeled Fenway opens. (A fire earlier in the year had caused $250,000 in damage to the bleachers in centerfield.)

1962

Red Sox righty **EARL WILSON** becomes the first African-American pitcher to toss a no-hitter in the AL, beating the Los Angeles Angels 2–0.

1967

Five weeks after making the All-Star team, Red Sox outfielder **TONY CONIGLIARO** is hit in the face by a pitch from the Angels' Jack Hamilton. Tony C will not play again until 1969 and is never the same.

>1967

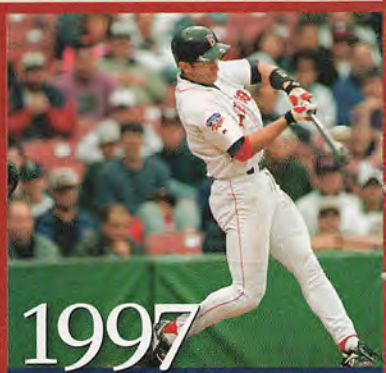
With a .326 average, 44 homers and 121 RBIs, CARL YASTRZEMSKI wins the AL triple crown; no player in either league has achieved the feat since.

1988

MARGO ADAMS files a $12 million palimony suit against Red Sox third baseman **WADE BOGGS**, claiming that Boggs had promised her a salary and expenses during a four-year affair.

1992

JEAN YAWKEY, who ran the team since her husband's death in 1976, dies. JRY Corporation, led by Harrington, takes control.



1997

NOMAR GARCIAPARRA wins AL Rookie of the Year honors by hitting .306 with 44 doubles, 30 homers, 98 RBIs and 22 stolen bases.

FAME LIBRARY; NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY/MLB/GETTY IMAGES; BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY; CORBIS (2); BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY; NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY; AP; COURTESY BOSTON RED SOX (2); AP; CORBIS; TED SANDE/AP; AP; CORBIS; BOSTON

Sports Illustrated

The SAGA of the SOX

COMPILED BY CHRIS MANNIX

>1919

Red Sox owner HARRY FRAZEE agrees to sell Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees for $125,000 and a $300,000 loan, with Fenway Park as the security.

1925

RED RUFFING goes 9–18 in his first year in Boston's rotation. The dismal Red Sox suffer through the first of three straight 100-loss seasons.

SOX PARK HAS BLEACHER FIRE

Third Base Seats at Fenway Destroyed—Grand Stand Also Damaged—Blaze Caused by Burning Cigar or Cigarette —Breaks Out Shortly After Conclusion of Game

High Wind Shoots Flames All Through Structure—Many Volunteer Workers

Loss Is $25,000—Braves Field Offered Sox Management for Monday's Game

1926

A fire breaks out shortly after a game at Fenway, causing $25,000 in damage and destroying the bleachers along the leftfield line.

Red
ALE
the
lose

1947

Lights are installed at Fenway Park. The Red Sox beat the White Sox 5–3 on June 13 in the park's first night game.

Ike's Envoy to Russia Opposed

Boston Evening Globe

BRAVES LEAVE HUB

If Deal Goes Through Monday

Perini to See Frick, Giles on Sending Club to Milwaukee

Beck Boy D.P. Wife Eager to Help U. S.

U. S. Shoots Next Time, Coaches Told

Move Also Shifts Browns to Baltimore

1953

After 77 years in Boston, the NL's Braves move to Milwaukee, leaving the Red Sox as the city's only major league franchise.

>1959

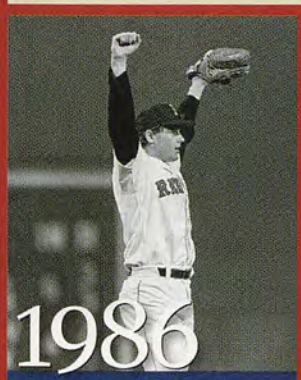
Infielder ELIJAH (PUMPSIE) GREEN *(pictured with manager Billy Jurges)* becomes the first African-American to play for the Red Sox. Boston is the final team in the majors to integrate.

1978

AL MVP **JIM RICE** hits .315 and leads the majors with 46 homers, 139 RBIs, 406 total bases, 213 hits and a .600 slugging percentage.

1978

BUCKY (BLEEPING) DENT



1986

ROGER CLEMENS strikes out 20 batters in a nine-inning game vs. the Seattle Mariners, an MLB record.

1986

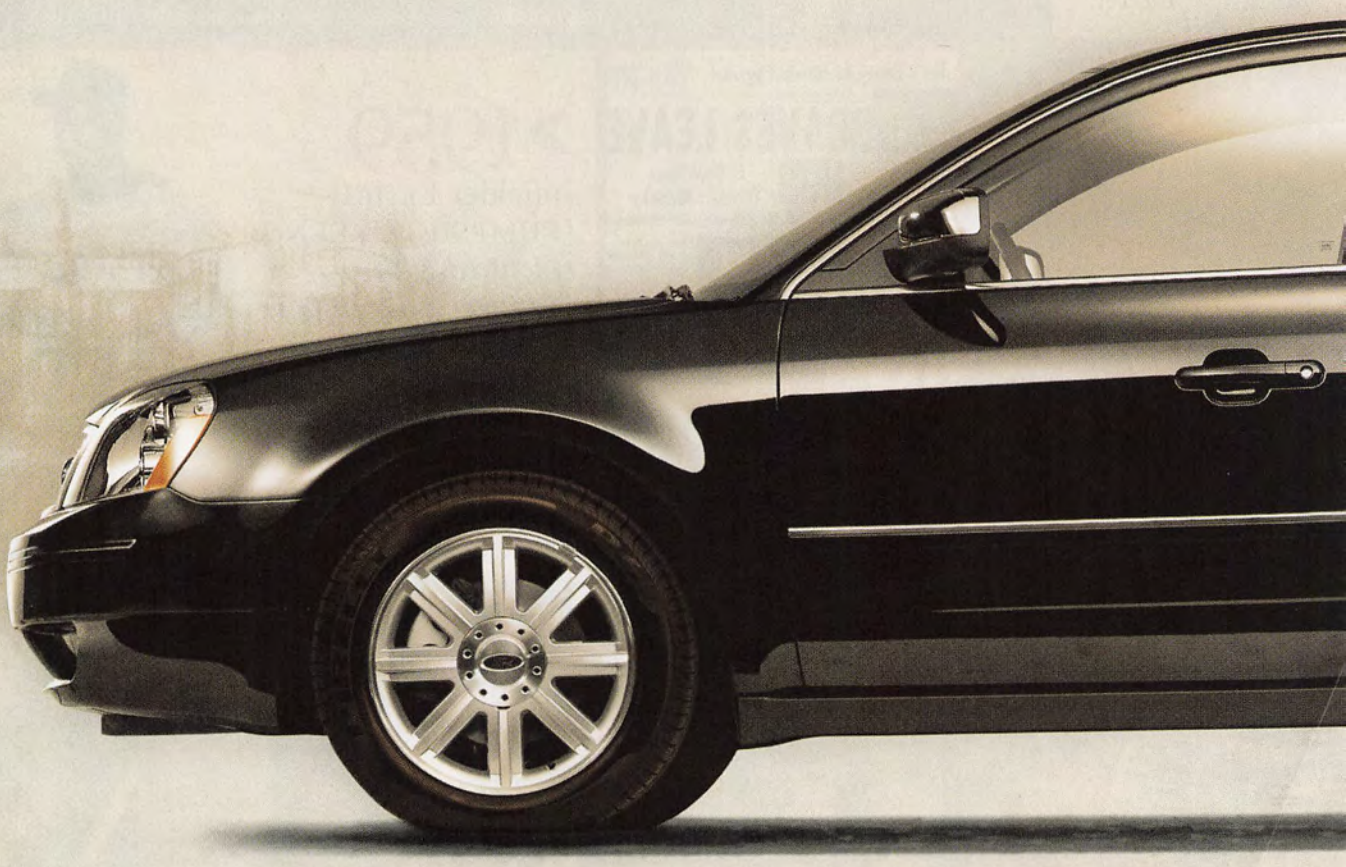
BILL BUCKNER

IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER: NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY; NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY/MLB/GETTY IMAGES; AP; BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY (2); NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY; LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL O

THE 62" VERTICAL.

Introducing the Ford Five Hundred. At 62 inches tall it stands as a towering achievement. Giving you Command Seating™ for a better view. Enormous room. Unexpected comfort. We think you'll agree the Five Hundred elevates the sedan. And our game. Visit fordvehicles.com.

*Well-equipped at $22,795.**



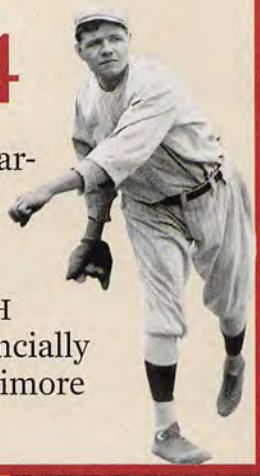
*2005 Five Hundred SE; as shown 2005 Five Hundred Limited $26,795 MSRP; taxes, title and license fees extra.

Ford
FIVE HUNDRED
Built for the road ahead.

1912

For a hot matchup between **SMOKEY JOE WOOD** and the Washington Senators' **WALTER JOHNSON**, Fenway fans are permitted to stand along the perimeter of the infield and behind home plate.

>1914



The Red Sox acquire 19-year-old lefty GEORGE HERMAN (BABE) RUTH from the financially strapped Baltimore Orioles.

Boston Evening Globe
EVENING EDITION—7:30 LATEST
SOX WIN CHAMPIONSHIP
U. S. TROOPSHIP TORPEDOED, BUT ALL ON BOARD SAVED
GUIDE FOR MEN REGISTERING FOR THE DRAFT TOMORROW
Full Score of the Game:

1918

Led by Ruth, who runs his record streak of scoreless World Series innings to 29⅔, the Red Sox win their fourth world championship in seven years.

sts as a pilot in the Navy Air Corps. 1943, '44 and '45 seasons due ce in World War II and most of the sons flying in the Korean War.

>1946

In the Red Sox' first Series appearance since 1918, St. Louis Cardinals outfielder ENOS SLAUGHTER dashes home with the winning run in the eighth inning of Game 7.

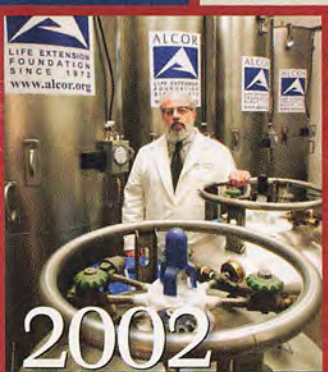
ield foul pole es. But the he next night.

>1976

The Yankees' LOU PINIELLA barrels into FISK at home plate, igniting a bench-clearing brawl that rekindles one of the game's most bitter rivalries.

1978

BILL (SPACEMAN) LEE, who once called his manager Don Zimmer "a gerbil," stages a one-day strike in protest of the Red Sox' selling outfielder Bernie Carbo to the Cleveland Indians.



2002

Williams dies of cardiac arrest at age 83; his body is flown to the Alcor Life Extension Foundation in Scottsdale, Ariz.

2003

AARON BOONE

2003

Boston acquires ace **CURT SCHILLING** from the Arizona Diamondbacks.

2004

The Red Sox make history by coming back from a 3–0 deficit to beat the Yankees in the ALCS. Boston then sweeps the Cardinals to win its first World Series in 86 years. Red Sox Nation weeps with joy.

...CROSSFIELD/BOSTON GLOBE; AP (2); DAMIAN STROHMEYER; DON KUNTZ/REUTERS; JOHN MOTTERN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; MIGUEL GOMEZ/AP; JEFF TOPPING/GETTY IMAGES; CHUCK SOLOMON; JEFF TOPPING/REUTERS; STEPHEN DUNN/GETTY IMAGES

1904

Boston retains its title as world champ after New York Giants owner John Brush refuses to allow his team to participate in the World Series.

1907

Owner **JOHN TAYLOR** changes the team's name to the Red Sox.

1912

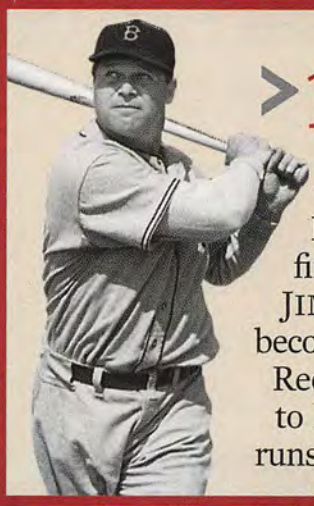
Boston's Fenway Park opens, complete with a 25-foot wooden wall in leftfield designed to prevent fans without tickets from climbing into the ballpark.

>1912

First baseman HUGH BRADLEY is the first player to homer over the wall in leftfield.

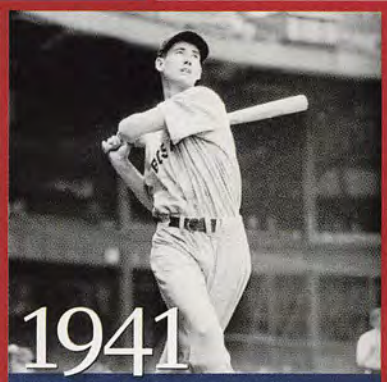
1935

The Red Sox purchase future Hall of Fame shortstop **JOE CRONIN** from the Washington Senators for $250,000 and name him player-manager.



>1938

En route to winning the MVP award, first baseman JIMMIE FOXX becomes the first Red Sox player to hit 50 home runs in a season.

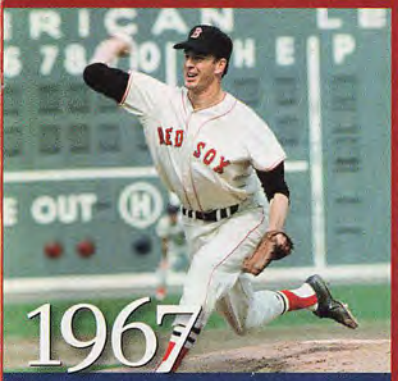


1941

TED WILLIAMS goes 6 for 8 in Boston's season-ending doubleheader to finish with a .406 average; he is the last major leaguer to hit .400.

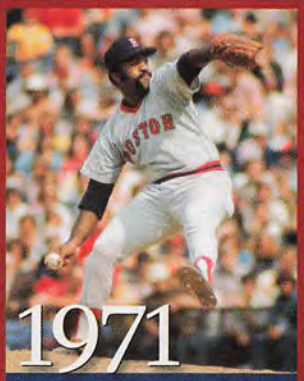
194

WILLIAMS enli
He will miss the
to military serv
'52 and '53 sea



1967

The Sox win the pennant in the Impossible Dream season. Boston falls to the Cardinals in the Series as Bob Gibson beats **JIM LONBORG** in Game 7.

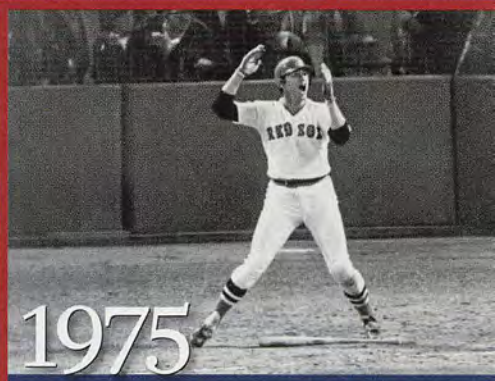


1971

LUIS TIANT goes 1–7 in his debut season with the Sox. El Tiante will go on to three 20-win seasons for Boston.

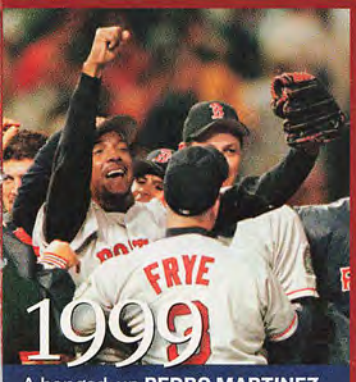
1973

After three years as controller for the AL, **JOHN HARRINGTON** is hired as Sox' treasurer.



1975

CARLTON FISK's 12th-inning home run off the left
at Fenway wins a classic Game 6 of the World Seri
Red Sox fall to the Cincinnati Reds 4–3 in Game 7



1999

A banged-up **PEDRO MARTINEZ** pitches six no-hit innings of relief to win the decisive Game 5 of the ALDS against the Indians.

>2000

MANNY RAMIREZ signs with the Red Sox for eight years and $160 million.

2002

A group led by **JOHN HENRY** *(right)*, Tom Werner and Larry Lucchino purchases the Red Sox and hires **THEO EPSTEIN** as G.M.

PUBLIC LIBR... THE BOSTON GLOBE; CORBIS; FRED KAPLAN; NEIL LEIFER; CORBIS; HERB SCHARFMAN; RICH PILLING/MLB PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES; THE BOSTON GLOBE; AP; NEIL LEIFER; HEINZ KLUETMEIER; RICH PILLING/MLB PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES; ROBERT RIGGS/AP; THE BOSTON

ELEVATING THE SEDAN.

FIVE HUNDRED
Built for the road ahead.

What the Red Sox mean to their faithful—and larger still, what sport at its best means to American culture—never was more evident than at precisely 11:40 EDT on the night of Oct. 27. At that moment in St. Louis, Red Sox closer Keith Foulke, upon fielding a ground ball, threw to first baseman Doug Mientkiewicz for the final out of the World Series—and the first Red Sox world championship since 1918. And then all hell didn't just break loose. It pretty much froze over.

All over New England, church bells clanged. Grown men wept. Poets whooped. Convicts cheered. Children rushed into the streets. Horns honked. Champagne corks popped. Strangers hugged.

Virginia Muise, 111, and Fred Hale, 113, smiled. Both Virginia, who kept a Red Sox cap beside her nightstand in New Hampshire, and Fred, who lived in Maine until moving to Syracuse, N.Y., at 109, were Red Sox fans who, curse be damned, were born *before Babe Ruth himself.* Virginia was the oldest person in New England. Fred was the oldest man in the world. Within three weeks after they had watched the Sox win the Series, both of them passed away.

They died happy.

Dear Red Sox:
Can you get married on the mound in, say, November at Fenway?

ON ITS most basic level, sport satisfies man's urge to challenge his physical being. And sometimes, if performed well enough, it inspires others in their own pursuits. And then, very rarely, it changes the social and cultural history of America; it changes *lives.* The 2004 Boston Red Sox are such a perfect storm.

The Red Sox are SI's Sportsmen of the Year, an honor they may have won even if the magnitude of their unprecedented athletic achievement was all that had been considered. Three outs from being swept in the ALCS, they won eight consecutive games, the last six without ever trailing. Their place in the sporting pantheon is fixed; the St. Jude of sports, patron saint of lost athletic causes, their spirit will be summoned at the bleakest of moments.

"It is the story of hope and faith rewarded," says Red Sox executive vice president Charles Steinberg. "You really believe that this is the story they're going to teach seven-year-olds 50 years from now. When they say, 'Naw, I can't do this,' you can say, 'Ah, yes you can. The obstacle was much greater for these 25 men, and they overcame. So can you.' "

What makes them undeniably, unforgettably Sportsmen, however, is that their achievement transcended the ballpark like that of no other professional sports team. The 1955 Brooklyn Dodgers were the coda to a sweet, special time and place in Americana. The 1968 Detroit Tigers gave needed joy to a city teeming with anger and strife. The 2001 Yankees provided a gathering place, even as a diversion, for a grieving, wounded city. The 2004 Red Sox made an even deeper impact because this championship was lifetimes in the making.

This Boston team connected generations, for the first time, with joy instead of disappointment as the emotional mortar. This team changed the way a people, raised to expect the worst, would think of themselves and the future. And the impact, like all things in that great, wide community called Red Sox Nation, resounded from cradle to grave.

On the morning after the Red Sox won the World Series, Sgt. Paul Barnicle, a detective with the Boston police and brother of *Boston Herald* columnist Mike Barnicle, left his shift at six, purchased a single red rose at the city's flower market, drove 42 miles to a cemetery in Fitchburg, Mass., and placed the rose on the headstone of his mother and father, among the many who had not lived long enough to see it.

Pilgrimages to the deceased were common. THE TOTEMS changed, but the sentiments remained the same.

FINAL RESPECTS Van Zile would like the team to produce a grave marker for die-hard fans who didn't get to see Nixon & Co. win it all.

Five days later, Roger Altman, former deputy treasury secretary in the Clinton Administration, who was born and raised in Brookline, Mass., flew from New York City to Boston carrying a laminated front page of the Oct. 28 *New York Times* (headline: RED SOX ERASE 86 YEARS OF FUTILITY IN FOUR GAMES). He drove to the gravesite of his mother, who had died in November 2003 at age 95, dug a shallow trench and buried the front page there.

Such pilgrimages to the deceased, common after the Red Sox conquered the Yankees in the ALCS, were repeated throughout the graveyards of New England. The totems changed, but the sentiments remained the same. At Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, for instance, gravestones were decorated with Red Sox pennants, hats, jerseys, baseballs, license plates and a hand-painted pumpkin.

So widespread was the remembrance of the deceased that several people, including Neil Van Zile Jr. of Westmoreland, N.H., beseeched the ball club to issue a permanent, weatherproof official Red Sox grave marker for dearly departed fans, similar to the metal markers the federal government provides for veterans. (Team president Lucchino says he's going to look into it, though Major League Baseball Properties would have to license it.) Van Zile's mother, Helen, a Sox fan who kept score during games and took her son to Game 2 of the 1967 World Series, died in 1995 at 72.

"There are thousands of people who would want it," Van Zile says. "My mom didn't get to see it. There isn't anything else I can do for her."

One day last year Van Zile was walking through a cemetery in Chesterfield, N.H., when the inscription on a grave stopped him.

JIM ROGASH/WIREIMAGE.COM (TOP); DAMIAN STROHMEYER

BLOUIN was the family name chiseled into the marble. Beneath that it said NAPOLEON A. 1926–1986. At the bottom, nearest to the ground, was the kicker of a lifetime.

DARN THOSE RED SOX.

Dear Red Sox:
Thanks for the motivation.
—JOSUE RODAS, MARINE, 6TH MOTOR TRANSPORT COMPANY, IRAQ

LIKE SNOWFLAKES in a blizzard came the e-mails. More than 10,000 of them flew into the Red Sox' server in the first 10 days after Boston won the World Series. No two exactly alike. They came from New England, but they also came from Japan, Italy, Pakistan and at least 11 other countries. The New England town hall of the 21st century was electronic.

There were thank-you letters. There were love letters. The letters were worded as if they were written to family members, and indeed the Red Sox were, in their own unkempt, scruffy, irreverent way, a likable, familial bunch. How could the faithful not love a band of characters self-deprecatingly self-dubbed the "idiots"?

DH David Ortiz, who slammed three walk-off postseason hits, was the Big Papi of the lineup and the clubhouse, with his outsized grin as much a signature of this team as his bat. Leftfielder Manny Ramirez hit like a machine but played the game with a sandlot smile plastered on his mug, even when taking pratfalls in the outfield. Long-locked centerfielder Johnny Damon made women swoon and men cheer and, with his Nazarene look, prompted a T-shirt and bumper sticker bonanza (WWJDD: WHAT WOULD JOHNNY DAMON DO? and HONK IF YOU LOVE JOHNNY).

First baseman Kevin Millar, with his Honest Abe beard and goofball personality, had the discipline to draw the walk off Yankees closer Mariano Rivera that began Boston's comeback in the ninth inning of ALCS Game 4. Righthander Derek Lowe, another shaggy eccentric, became the first pitcher to win the clinching game of three postseason series in one October. Foulke, third baseman Bill Mueller, catcher Jason Varitek and rightfielder Trot Nixon—the club's longest-tenured player, known for his pine-tar-encrusted batting helmet—provided gritty ballast.

The love came in e-mails that brought word from soldiers in Iraq with Red Sox patches on their uniforms or Red Sox camouflage hats, the symbols of a nation within a nation. The cannon cockers of the 3rd Battalion 11th Marine Regiment built a mini Fenway Park at Camp Ramadi. Soldiers awoke at 3 a.m. to watch the Sox on a conference-room TV at Camp Liberty in Baghdad, the games ending just in time for the troops to fall in and receive their daily battle briefing.

A woman wrote of visiting an ancient temple in Tokyo and finding this message inscribed on a prayer block: MAY THE RED SOX PLAY ALWAYS AT FENWAY PARK, AND MAY THEY WIN THE WORLD SERIES IN MY LIFETIME.

Besides the e-mails there were boxes upon boxes of letters, photographs, postcards, school projects and drawings that continue to cover what little floor space is left in the Red Sox' offices. Mostly the missives convey profound gratitude.

"Thank you," wrote Maryam Farzeneh, a Boston University graduate student from Iran, "for being another reason for me and my boyfriend to connect and love each other. He is a Red Sox fan and moved to Ohio two years ago. There were countless nights that I kept the phone next to the radio so that we could listen to the game together."

Maryam had never seen a baseball game before 1998. She knew how obsessed people back home were about soccer teams. "Although I should admit," she wrote, "that is nothing like the relationship between the Red Sox and the fans in New England."

More than 10,000 E-MAILS FLEW into the Red Sox' server in the first 10 days after Boston won the World Series.

MOTHER KNOWS BEST Kathryn (top, left) grew up watching Williams; now she and Roberta cheer for Ortiz and the Series champs.

JAY L. CLENDENIN/POLARIS (TOP); DAMIAN STROHMEYER

Dear Red Sox:
Your first round of drinks is free.
—THE LOOSE MOOSE SALOON, GRAY, MAINE

NIGHTFALL, AND the little girl lies on her back in the rear seat of a sedan as it chugs homeward to Hartford. She watches the stars twinkle in between the wooden telephone poles that rhythmically interrupt her view of the summer sky. And there is the familiar company of a gravelly voice on the car radio providing play-by-play of Red Sox baseball. The great Ted Williams, her mother's favorite, is batting.

Roberta Rogers closes her eyes, and she is that little girl again, and the world is just as perfect and as full of wonder and possibilities as it was on those warm summer nights growing up in postwar New England.

"I laugh when I think about it," she says. "There is nothing wrong with the memory. Nothing."

Once every summer her parents took her and her brother, Nathaniel, to Boston to stay at the Kenmore Hotel and watch the Red Sox at Fenway. Nathaniel liked to operate the safety gates of the hotel elevator, often letting on and off the visiting ballplayers who stayed at the Kenmore.

"Look," Kathryn Stoddard, their mother, said quietly one day as a well-dressed gentleman stepped off the lift. "That's Joe DiMaggio."

Kathryn, of course, so despised the Yankees that she never called them just the *Yankees*. They were always the *Damnyankees*, as if it were one word.

Get back to mischief.

VIAGRA®
(sildenafil citrate) tablets

Compliments of VIAGRA:
the erectile dysfunction treatment that started it all.

- VIAGRA works fast* and provides reliably rigid erections.†
- 96% of men were satisfied with how well VIAGRA worked in a 4-year, open-label study.

Thanks to VIAGRA, you're back...which means making love is better for you and your partner.†

Ask your doctor if VIAGRA is right for you.

VIAGRA is prescribed to treat erectile dysfunction. We know that no medicine is for everyone. If you use nitrate drugs, often used for chest pain (known as angina), don't take VIAGRA. Taking these drugs together could cause your blood pressure to drop to an unsafe level.

The most common side effects of VIAGRA are headache, facial flushing, and upset stomach. Less common are bluish or blurred vision, or being sensitive to light. These may occur for a brief time. Remember to protect yourself and your partner from sexually transmitted diseases.

Talk with your doctor first. Make sure you are healthy enough to have sex. If you have chest pain, nausea, or other discomforts during sex, seek medical help right away. The same is true if you have an erection that lasts more than 4 hours. Call for help at once.

VIAGRA is covered under most Managed Care Plans.

* For some men, in as quickly as 10 minutes; for most, in under a half hour (statistical significance at 14 minutes). In this study, VIAGRA responders, given 100 mg 2 hours after eating, were timed to see how fast they got an erection that enabled them to have sex.

† Data on file. Pfizer Inc., New York, NY

Please see our patient summary of information for VIAGRA (25 mg, 50 mg, 100 mg) tablets on the following page.

To learn more, visit viagra.com or call 1-888-4VIAGRA

VIAGRA (sildenafil citrate) tablets

Not all medications are for everyone.
Pfizer reminds you
to consult with your physician.

Pfizer U.S. Pharmaceuticals

Get back to mischief is a trademark of Pfizer Inc.

VG214394A © 2004 Pfizer Inc. All rights reserved.

PATIENT SUMMARY OF INFORMATION ABOUT VIAGRA®

(sildenafil citrate) tablets

This summary contains important information about VIAGRA®. It is not meant to take the place of your doctor's instructions. Read this information carefully before you start taking VIAGRA. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you do not understand any of this information or if you want to know more about VIAGRA.

This medicine can help many men when it is used as prescribed by their doctors. However, VIAGRA is not for everyone. It is intended for use only by men who have a condition called erectile dysfunction. **VIAGRA must never be used by men who are taking medicines that contain nitrates of any kind, at any time. This includes nitroglycerin. If you take VIAGRA with any nitrate medicine your blood pressure could suddenly drop to an unsafe or life threatening level.**

• What Is VIAGRA?

VIAGRA is a pill used to treat erectile dysfunction (impotence) in men. It can help many men who have erectile dysfunction get and keep an erection when they become sexually excited (stimulated).

You will not get an erection just by taking this medicine. VIAGRA helps a man with erectile dysfunction get an erection only when he is sexually excited.

• How Sex Affects the Body

When a man is sexually excited, the penis rapidly fills with more blood than usual. The penis then expands and hardens. This is called an erection. After the man is done having sex, this extra blood flows out of the penis back into the body. The erection goes away. If an erection lasts for a long time (more than 6 hours), it can permanently damage your penis. You should call a doctor immediately if you ever have a prolonged erection that lasts more than 4 hours.

Some conditions and medicines interfere with this natural erection process. The penis cannot fill with enough blood. The man cannot have an erection. This is called erectile dysfunction if it becomes a frequent problem.

During sex, your heart works harder. Therefore sexual activity may not be advisable for people who have heart problems. Before you start any treatment for erectile dysfunction, ask your doctor if your heart is healthy enough to handle the extra strain of having sex. If you have chest pains, dizziness or nausea during sex, stop having sex and immediately tell your doctor you have had this problem.

• How VIAGRA Works

VIAGRA enables many men with erectile dysfunction to respond to sexual stimulation. When a man is sexually excited, VIAGRA helps the penis fill with enough blood to cause an erection. After sex is over, the erection goes away.

• VIAGRA Is Not for Everyone

As noted above (*How Sex Affects the Body*), ask your doctor if your heart is healthy enough for sexual activity.

If you take any medicines that contain nitrates – either regularly or as needed – you should never take VIAGRA. If you take VIAGRA with any nitrate medicine or recreational drug containing nitrates, your blood pressure could suddenly drop to an unsafe level. You could get dizzy, faint, or even have a heart attack or stroke. Nitrates are found in many prescription medicines that are used to treat angina (chest pain due to heart disease) such as:

- nitroglycerin (sprays, ointments, skin patches or pastes, and tablets that are swallowed or dissolved in the mouth)
- isosorbide mononitrate and isosorbide dinitrate (tablets that are swallowed, chewed, or dissolved in the mouth)

Nitrates are also found in recreational drugs such as amyl nitrate or nitrite ("poppers"). If you are not sure if any of your medicines contain nitrates, or if you do not understand what nitrates are, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

VIAGRA is only for patients with erectile dysfunction. VIAGRA is not for newborns, children, or women. Do not let anyone else take your VIAGRA. VIAGRA must be used only under a doctor's supervision.

• What VIAGRA Does Not Do

- VIAGRA does not cure erectile dysfunction. It is a treatment for erectile dysfunction.
- VIAGRA does not protect you or your partner from getting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV — the virus that causes AIDS.
- VIAGRA is not a hormone or an aphrodisiac.

• What To Tell Your Doctor Before You Begin VIAGRA

Only your doctor can decide if VIAGRA is right for you. VIAGRA can cause mild, temporary lowering of your blood pressure. You will need to have a thorough medical exam to diagnose your erectile dysfunction and to find out if you can safely take VIAGRA alone or with your other medicines. Your doctor should determine if your heart is healthy enough to handle the extra strain of having sex.

Be sure to tell your doctor if you:

- have ever had any heart problems (e.g., angina, chest pain, heart failure, irregular heart beats, heart attack or narrowing of the aortic valve)
- have ever had a stroke
- have low or high blood pressure
- have a rare inherited eye disease called retinitis pigmentosa
- have ever had any kidney problems
- have ever had any liver problems
- have ever had any blood problems, including sickle cell anemia or leukemia
- are allergic to sildenafil or any of the other ingredients of VIAGRA tablets
- have a deformed penis, Peyronie's disease, or ever had an erection that lasted more than 4 hours
- have stomach ulcers or any types of bleeding problems
- are taking any other medicines

• VIAGRA and Other Medicines

Some medicines can change the way VIAGRA works. Tell your doctor about **any medicines** you are taking. Do not start or stop taking any medicines before checking with your doctor or pharmacist. This includes prescription and nonprescription medicines or remedies:

- Remember, VIAGRA should never be used with medicines that contain nitrates (see *VIAGRA Is Not for Everyone*).
- If you are taking alpha-blocker therapy for the treatment of high blood pressure or prostate problems, you should not take a dose of greater than 25 mg of VIAGRA at the same time (within 4 hours) as you take your dose of alpha-blocker.
- If you are taking a protease inhibitor, your dose may be adjusted (please see *Finding the Right Dose for You*).
- VIAGRA should not be used with any other medical treatments that cause erections. These treatments include pills, medicines that are injected or inserted into the penis, implants or vacuum pumps.

• Finding the Right Dose for You

VIAGRA comes in different doses (25 mg, 50 mg and 100 mg). If you do not get the results you expect, talk with your doctor. You and your doctor can determine the dose that works best for you.

- Do not take more VIAGRA than your doctor prescribes.
- If you think you need a larger dose of VIAGRA, check with your doctor.
- VIAGRA should not be taken more than once a day.

If you are older than age 65, or have serious liver or kidney problems, your doctor may start you at the lowest dose (25 mg) of VIAGRA. If you are taking protease inhibitors, such as for the treatment of HIV, your doctor may recommend a 25 mg dose and may limit you to a maximum single dose of 25 mg of VIAGRA in a 48 hour period. If you are taking alpha-blocker therapy, you should not take a dose of greater than 25 mg of VIAGRA at the same time (within 4 hours) as your dose of alpha-blocker.

• How To Take VIAGRA

Take VIAGRA about one hour before you plan to have sex. Beginning in about 30 minutes and for up to 4 hours, VIAGRA can help you get an erection if you are sexually excited. If you take VIAGRA after a high-fat meal (such as a cheeseburger and french fries), the medicine may take a little longer to start working. VIAGRA can help you get an erection when you are sexually excited. You will not get an erection just by taking the pill.

• Possible Side Effects

Like all medicines, VIAGRA can cause some side effects. These effects are usually mild to moderate and usually don't last longer than a few hours. Some of these side effects are more likely to occur with higher doses. The most common side effects of VIAGRA are headache, flushing of the face, and upset stomach. Less common side effects that may occur are temporary changes in color vision (such as trouble telling the difference between blue and green objects or having a blue color tinge to them), eyes being more sensitive to light, or blurred vision.

In rare instances, men have reported an erection that lasts many hours. You should call a doctor immediately if you ever have an erection that lasts more than 4 hours. If not treated right away, permanent damage to your penis could occur (see *How Sex Affects the Body*).

Heart attack, stroke, irregular heart beats, and death have been reported rarely in men taking VIAGRA. Most, but not all, of these men had heart problems before taking this medicine. It is not possible to determine whether these events were directly related to VIAGRA.

VIAGRA may cause other side effects besides those listed on this sheet. If you want more information or develop any side effects or symptoms you are concerned about, call your doctor.

• Accidental Overdose

In case of accidental overdose, call your doctor right away.

• Storing VIAGRA

Keep VIAGRA out of the reach of children. Keep VIAGRA in its original container. Store at 25°C (77°F); excursions permitted to 15-30°C (59-86°F) [see USP Controlled Room Temperature].

• For More Information on VIAGRA

VIAGRA is a prescription medicine used to treat erectile dysfunction. Only your doctor can decide if it is right for you. This sheet is only a summary. If you have any questions or want more information about VIAGRA, talk with your doctor or pharmacist, visit www.viagra.com, or call 1-888-4VIAGRA.

Pfizer

VG214394A
©2004 Pfizer Inc.

September 2002

Makes A Great Gift!

Sports Illustrated Classic Cover Collection

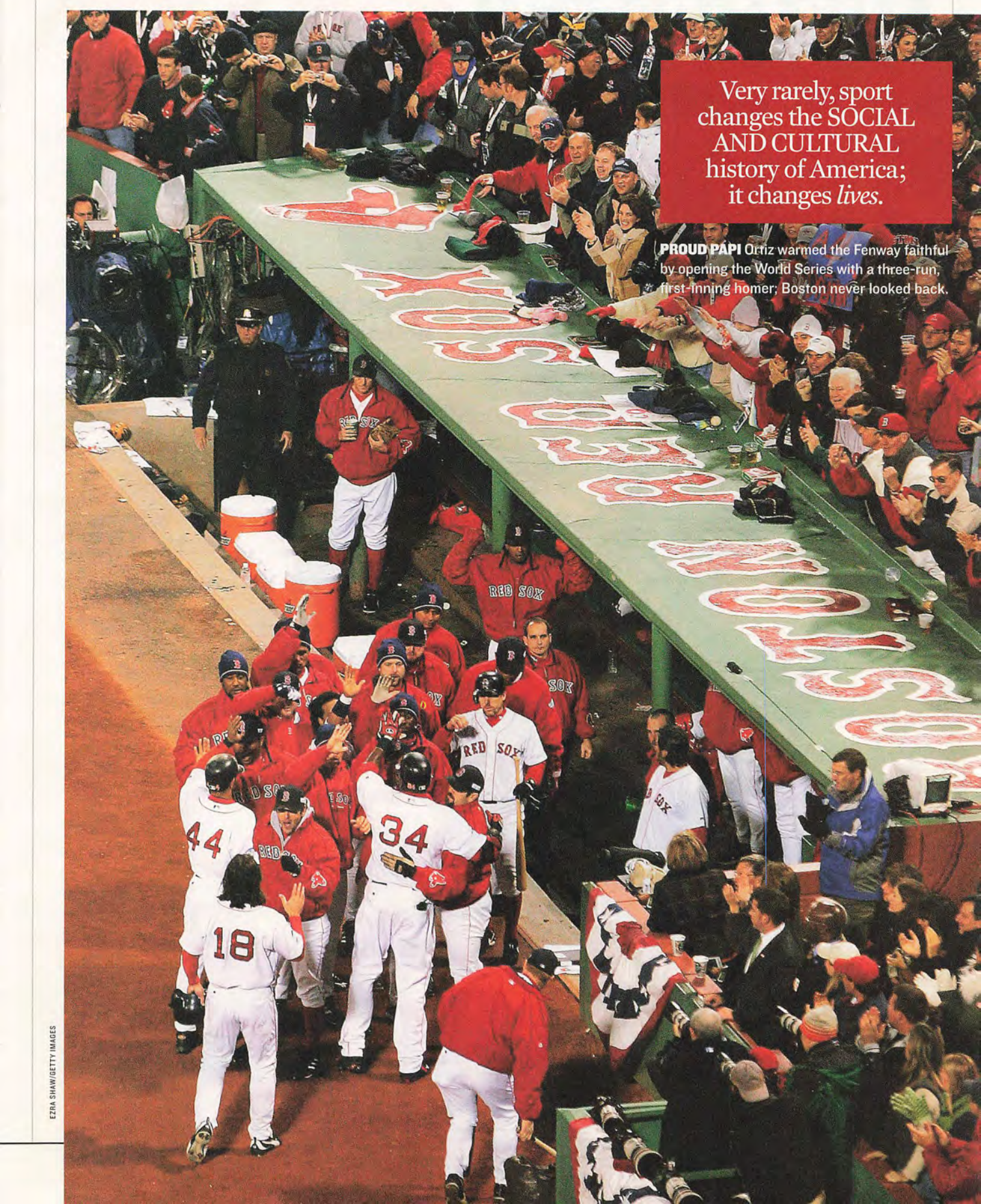
www.sicovers.com

Order high-quality 11"x14" photo print reproductions of your favorite SI covers today. With a library of more than 1,400 prized covers from 30 sports available, there's something special for every sports fan.

$19.95 EACH
FREE SHIPPING
on three or more!

Residents of California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Tennessee, Texas and Washington D.C. must add appropriate sales tax. No returns. Refunds are granted in the original form of payment and only when an item is incorrectly shipped or arrives defective or damaged. The purchaser agrees that the materials purchased are for personal use only and will not be published or reproduced in any way, nor used for commercial purposes.

©2004 Time Inc. All Rights Reserved. SPORTS ILLUSTRATED is a registered trademark of Time Inc.


RED SOX
RED SOX
RED SOX

This Season Score Big.

"ESPN Videogames, nothing but quality."
– Game Informer

$19.99 ea.

espnvideogames.com

PLAYERS INC NFL NHLPA NCAA ESPN VIDEOGAMES

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB — Violence *

PlayStation.2 ONLINE BROADBAND AND DIAL-UP XBOX XBOX LIVE SEGA®

Sega is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Sega and the Sega logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Sega Corporation © SEGA CORPORATION, 2004. All Rights Reserved. © 2004 NFL Properties LLC. Team names and logos are trademarks of the teams indicated. All other (NFL-related marks) are trademarks of the National Football League. Officially Licensed product of PLAYERS INC. The PLAYERS INC logo is a registered trademark of the NFL players. www.nflplayers.com © 2004 PLAYERS INC. The "Officially Licensed Collegiate Products" label is the exclusive property of The Collegiate Licensing Company. The "Collegiate Licensed Product" label is the property of the Independent Labeling Group. All names, logos, team icons, and mascots associated with the NCAA, universities, and conferences are the exclusive property of the respective institutions. NCAA, the NCAA logo, and NCAA Basketball are trademarks or registered trademarks of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. NHL and the NHL Shield are registered trademarks of the National Hockey League. All NHL logos and marks and team logos and marks depicted herein are the property of the NHL and the respective teams and may not be reproduced without the prior written consent of NHL Enterprises, L.P. (c) 2004. All rights reserved. Officially Licensed Product of the National Hockey League. (c) NHLPA. ESPN NHL 2K5 is an Officially Licensed Product of the NHLPA. NHLPA, National Hockey League Players' Association and the NHLPA logo are trademarks of the NHLPA and are used under license by Sega of America, Inc. The NBA and individual NBA member team identifications used on or in this product are trademarks, copyrighted designs and other forms of intellectual property of NBA Properties, Inc. and the respective NBA member teams and may not be used, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of NBA Properties, Inc. © 2004 NBA Properties, Inc. All rights reserved. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Online play requires internet connection, Network Adaptor (for PlayStation 2) and Memory Card (8MB) (for PlayStation 2) (each sold separately). The Online icon is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox *Live*, Xbox *Live* logos and Xbox logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or in other countries and are used under license from Microsoft. ESPN is a trademark of ESPN, Inc. ESPN Branded Elements ©2004 ESPN, Inc. *Violence descriptor pertains to ESPN NHL 2K5 games only.

"We didn't have much money," Roberta says. "We didn't take vacations, didn't go to the beach. That was it. We went to the Kenmore, and we watched the Red Sox at Fenway. I still have the images . . . the crowds, the stadium, the sounds, the feel of the cement under my feet, passing hot dogs down the row, the big green wall, the Citgo sign—it was green back then—coming into view as we drove into Boston, telling us we were almost there. . . . "

Roberta lives in New Market, Va., now, her mother nearby in a retirement facility. Kathryn is 95 years old and still takes the measure of people by their rooting interest in baseball.

"Acceptable if they root for the Sox, suspect if they don't, and if a Damnyankee fan, hardly worth mentioning," Roberta says.

On Oct. 27, two outs in the bottom of the ninth, Boston winning 3–0, Roberta paced in her living room, her eyes turned away from the TV.

"Oh, Bill," she said to her husband, "they can still be the Red Sox! They can still lose this game!"

It was not without good reason that her mother had called them the *Red Flops* all these years.

"And then I heard the roar," Roberta says.

This time they really did it. They really won. She called her children and called "everybody I could think of." It was too late to ring Kathryn, she figured. Kathryn's eyesight and hearing are failing, and she was surely sleeping at such a late hour.

So Roberta went to see Kathryn first thing the next morning.

"Mom, guess what? I've got the best news!" Roberta said. "They won! The Red Sox won!"

Kathryn's face lit up with a big smile, and she lifted both fists in triumph. And then the mother and daughter laughed and laughed. Just like little girls.

Dear Red Sox:
I really want to surprise my whole school and the principal.

—MAINE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, ASKING THAT THE ENTIRE TEAM VISIT HIS SCHOOL

"IS THAT what I think it is?"

The conductor on the 11:15 a.m. Acela out of Boston to New York, Larry Solomon, had recognized Charles Steinberg and noted the size of the case he was carrying.

"Yes," the Red Sox VP replied. "Would you like to see it?"

Steinberg opened the case and revealed the gleaming gold Commissioner's Trophy, the Red Sox' world championship trophy. Solomon, who had survived leukemia and rooting for the Sox, fought back tears.

The Red Sox are taking the trophy on tour to their fans. On this day it was off to New York City and a convocation of the Benevolent Loyal Order of the Honorable Ancient Redsox Diehard Sufferers, a.k.a. the BLOHARDS.

"I've only cried twice in my life," Richard Welch, 64 and a BLOHARD, said that night. "Once when the Vietnam War ended. And two weeks ago when the Red Sox won the World Series."

Everywhere the trophy goes someone weeps at the sight of it. Everyone wants to touch it, like Thomas probing the wounds of the risen Jesus. Touching is encouraged.

"Their emotional buckets have filled all these years," Steinberg says, "and the trophy overflows them. It's an intense, cathartic experience."

Why? Why should the bond between a people and their baseball team be so intense? Fenway Park is a part of it, offering a physical continuum to the bond, not only because Papi can stand in the same batter's box as Teddy Ballgame, but also because a son might sit in the same wooden-slat seat as his father.

"We do have our tragic history," says the poet Donald Hall, a Vermonter who lives in the house where his great-grandfather once lived.

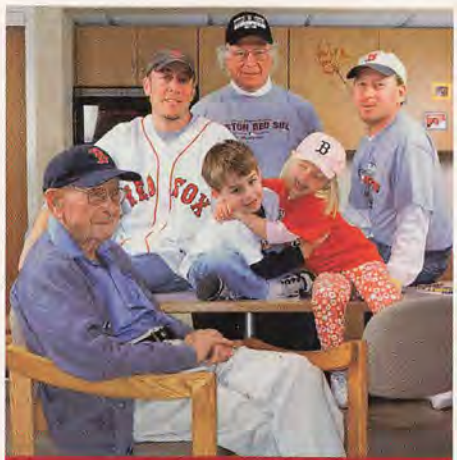
The Sox specialized not, like the Chicago Cubs, in woebegone, hopeless baseball, but in an agonizing, painful kind. Indeed, hope was at the very breakable heart of their cruelty. From the 1967 Impossible Dream team until last season, the Red Sox had fielded 31 winning teams in 37 years, nine of which reached the postseason. They were good enough to make it hurt.

"It's probably the desperately cruel winters we endure in New England," Mike Barnicle offers as an explanation. "When the Red Sox reappear, that's the season when the sun is back and warmth returns and we associate them with that.

"Also, a lot has to do with how the area is more stable in terms of demographics than most places. People don't move from New England. They stay here. And others come to college here and get infected with Red Sox fever. They get it at the age of 18 and carry it with them when they go out into the world."

If you are born north of Hartford, there is no other big league baseball team for which to root, just as it has been since the Braves left Boston for Milwaukee in 1953. It is a birthright to which you quickly learn the oral history. The Babe, Denny Galehouse, Johnny Pesky, Bucky Dent, Bill Buckner and Aaron Boone are beads on a string, an antirosary committed to memory by every son and daughter of the Nation.

"I've known nothing different in my life," says David Nathan, 34, who, like his brother Marc, 37, learned at the hand of his father, Leslie, 68, who learned at the hand of his father, Morris, 96. "It's so hard to put into words. I was 16 in 1986 sitting in the living



This Boston team connected generations WITH JOY instead of disappointment as the emotional mortar.

ALL IN THE FAMILY Ramirez's heroics helped change life for the Nathans (clockwise from left: Morris, David, Leslie, Marc, Jessica and Jack).

PETER GREGOIRE (TOP); HEINZ KLUETMEIER

room when the ball went through Buckner's legs. We all had champagne ready, and you just sit back and watch it in disbelief.

"I was at Game 7 last year and brought my wife. I said, 'You need to experience it.' The Sox were up 5–2, and my wife said to me, 'They've got this in the bag.' I said, 'No, they don't. I'm telling you, they don't until the last out.'

"I used to look at my dad and not understand why he cried when they lost or cried when they won. Now I understand."

At 11:40 on the night of Oct. 27, David Nathan held a bottle of champagne in one hand and a telephone in the other, his father on the other end of the line. David screamed so loud that he woke up his four-year-old son, Jack, the fourth generation Nathan who, along with Marc's four-year-old daughter, Jessica, will know a whole new world of Sox fandom. The string of beads is broken.

David's wife recorded the moment with a video camera. Two weeks later David would sit and write it all down in a long e-mail, expressing his thanks to Red Sox owner John Henry.

"As my father said to me the next day," David wrote, "he felt like a burden was finally lifted off of his shoulders after all these years."

He read the e-mail to his father over the telephone. It ended, "Thanks again and long live Red Sox Nation." David could hear his father sobbing on the other end.

"It's nice to know after all these years," Leslie said, "something of mine has rubbed off on you."

Dear Red Sox:
I obviously didn't know what I was talking about.

—FAN APOLOGIZING FOR HIS MANY PREVIOUS E-MAILS, ESPECIALLY THE ONE AFTER GAME 3 OF THE ALCS, IN WHICH HE VERY COLORFULLY EXPRESSED HIS DISGUST FOR THE TEAM AND THE PEOPLE RUNNING IT

IT WAS one minute after midnight on Oct. 20, and Jared Dolphin, 30, had just assumed his guard post on the overnight shift at the Corrigan-Radgowski correctional facility in Montville, Conn., a Level IV security prison, one level below the maximum. The inmate in the cell nearest him was 10 years into a 180-year sentence for killing his girlfriend's entire family, including the dog.

Some of the inmates wore makeshift Red Sox "caps"—a commissary bandanna or handkerchief festooned with a hand-drawn iconic "B." Technically they were considered contraband, but the rules were bent when it came to rooting for the Red Sox in October. A few inmates watched ALCS Game 7 on 12-inch portable televisions they had purchased in the prison for $200. Most leaned their faces against the little window of their cell door to catch the game on the cell block television. Others saw only the reflection of the TV on the window of another cell door.

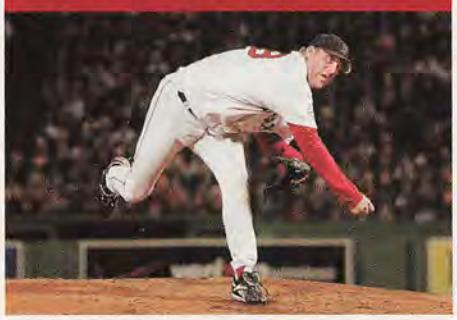
A Sox fan himself, Dolphin watched as Alan Embree retired the Yankees' Ruben Sierra on a ground ball to end the greatest comeback in sports history. Dolphin started to cry.

"Suddenly the block erupted," Dolphin wrote in an e-mail. "I bristled immediately and instinctively my hand reached for my flashlight. It was pandemonium—whistling, shouting, pounding on sinks, doors, bunks, anything cons could find. This was against every housing rule in the book, so I jumped up, ready to lay down the law.

"But as I stood there looking around the block I felt something else. I felt hope. Here I was, less than 10 feet away from guys that will never see the outside of prison ever again in their lives. The guy in the cell to my immediate left had 180 years. He wasn't going anywhere anytime soon. But as I watched him scream, holler and pound on the door I realized he and I had something in common. That night hope beamed into his life as well. As Red Sox fans we had watched the impossible happen, and if that dream could come true why couldn't others.

"Instead of marching around the block trying to restore order I put my flashlight down and clapped. My applause joined the ruckus they were making and for five minutes it didn't stop. I applauded until my hands hurt. I was applauding the possibilities for the future."

Everyone wants to TOUCH THE TROPHY, like Thomas probing the wounds of the risen Jesus.



FANS BEHIND BARS Dolphin found that Schilling and the Sox brought hope even to a prison where none was thought possible.

Dear Red Sox:
Any player who speaks Latin.

—REQUEST FOR A RED SOX PLAYER TO VISIT THE LATIN CLASS AT A MIDDLE SCHOOL IN NEWTON, MASS.

ON THE day after Christmas 2003, Gregory Miller, 38, of Foxboro, Mass., an enthusiastic sports fan, especially when it came to the Sox, dropped dead of an aneurysm. He left behind a wife, Sharon, six-year-old twin boys and an 18-month-old daughter. Sharon fell into unspeakable sadness and loneliness.

And then came October and the Red Sox.

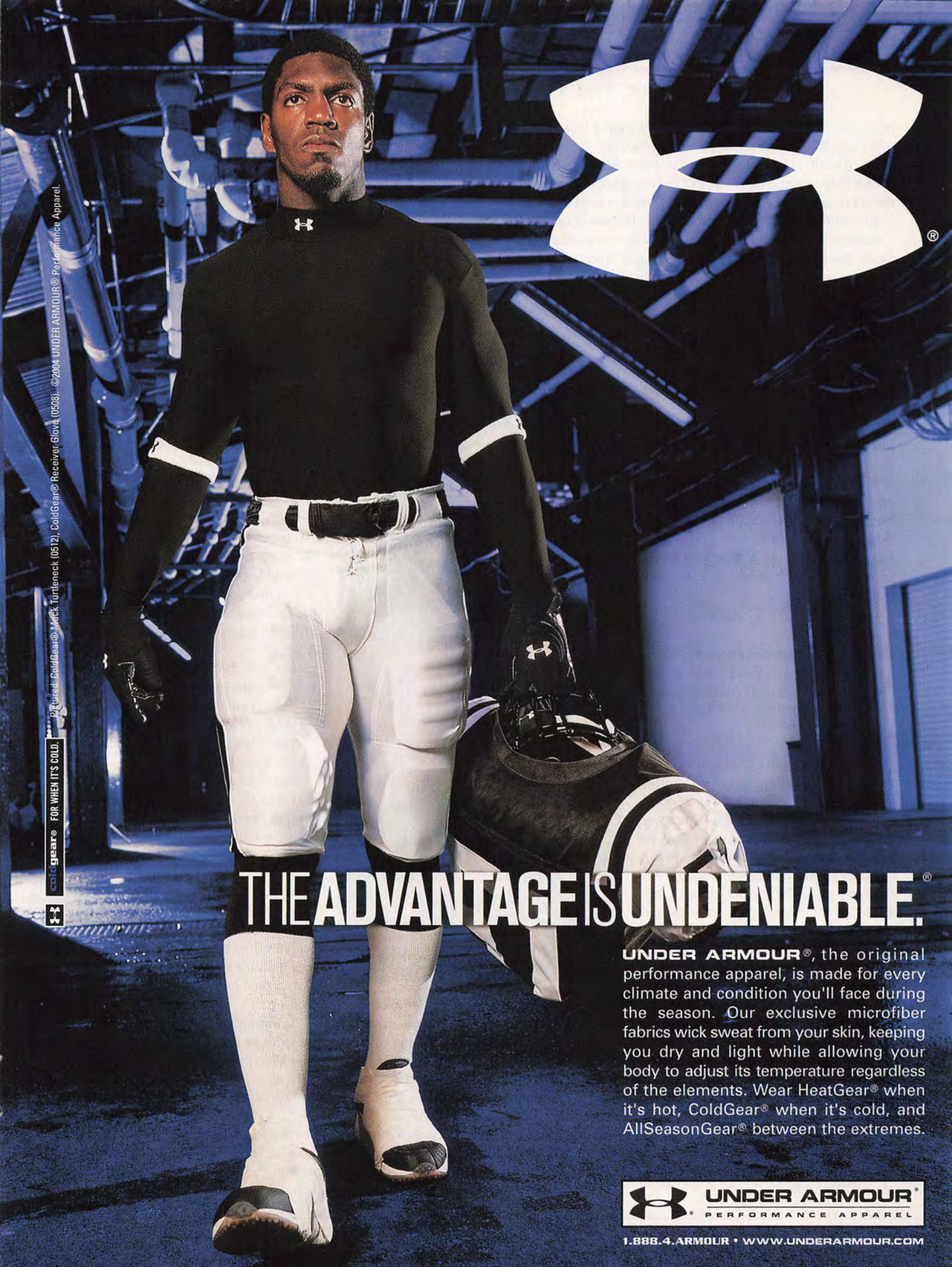
Sharon, not much more than a casual fan before then, grew enthralled with the team's playoff run. She called her mother, Carolyn Bailey, in Walpole, as many as 15 times during the course of a game to complain, exult, worry, commiserate and celebrate. She even made jokes.

"My eyes need toothpicks to stay open," Sharon would say during the run of late games. "More Visine. I need more Visine."

Carolyn laughed, and her heart leaped to see her daughter joyful again. She had not seen or heard her like this since Gregory died.

"It was the first time she started to smile and laugh again," Car-

AMANI WILETT (TOP); CHUCK SOLOMON


THE ADVANTAGE IS UNDENIABLE.®
UNDER ARMOUR®, the original performance apparel, is made for every climate and condition you'll face during the season. Our exclusive microfiber fabrics wick sweat from your skin, keeping you dry and light while allowing your body to adjust its temperature regardless of the elements. Wear HeatGear® when it's hot, ColdGear® when it's cold, and AllSeasonGear® between the extremes.
UNDER ARMOUR®
PERFORMANCE APPAREL
1.888.4.ARMOUR • WWW.UNDERARMOUR.COM
coldgear® FOR WHEN IT'S COLD.
Pictured: ColdGear® Mock Turtleneck (0512), ColdGear® Receiver Glove (0508). ©2004 UNDER ARMOUR® Performance Apparel.

olyn says. "The Red Sox gave her something to look forward to every day. They became like part of the family."

The day after the Red Sox won the World Series, Carolyn wrote a letter to the team. In it she said of her daughter, "The Red Sox became her medicine on the road back from this tragedy. On behalf of my entire family—thank you from the bottom of our hearts."

Leah Storey of Tilton, N.H., composed her own letter of thanks to the Red Sox. Her father had died exactly one year before the Red Sox won the World Series. Then her 26-year-old brother, Ethan, died of an accidental drug overdose only hours after enthusiastically watching the Red Sox win ALCS Game 5. When the Red Sox won the World Series, Ethan's friends and family rushed outside the Storey house, yelled for joy, popped open a bottle of Dom Perignon and gazed up in wonder at a lunar eclipse, and beyond.

"To us, with the memory of Ethan's happy night fresh in our minds, those games took on new meaning," Leah wrote of Boston's run to the championship. "Almost as if they were being played in his honor. Thank you for not letting him down. I can't express enough the comfort we derived from watching you play night after night. It didn't erase the pain, but it helped."

Dear Red Sox:
I would even volunteer my time to clean up, do the dishes, whatever.
—FAN ASKING THAT THE SOX HOST AN EVENT WHERE PLAYERS GREET FANS 80 AND OLDER

ON OCT. 25 the Sox were two victories away from winning the World Series when doctors sent George Sumner home to his Waltham house to die. There was nothing more they could do for him. At home, though, George's stomach began to fill with fluid, and he was rushed back to the hospital. The doctors did what they could. They said he was in such bad shape that they were uncertain if he could survive the ride back home.

Suddenly, his eyes still closed, George pointed to a corner of the room, as if someone was there, and said, "Nope, not yet."

And then George went back home to Waltham. Leah knew that every day and every game were precious. She prayed hard for a sweep.

On the morning of Game 4, which stood to be the highlight of Jaime Andrews's life as a "pathetic," obsessed Red Sox fan, his wife, Alice, went into labor. Here it was: the conflict Jaime had feared all summer. At 2:30 p.m. he took her into South Shore Hospital, where they were greeted by nurses wearing Red Sox jerseys over their scrubs.

Patron saint of lost athletic causes, the RED SOX' SPIRIT will be summoned at the bleakest of moments.

WHO'S OUR FATHER? Dianne, Patrick and the parishioners at St. Francis came up with a unique way to pray for Pedro and the boys.

At 8:25 p.m., Alice was in the delivery room. There was a TV in the room. The game in St. Louis was about to begin.

"Turn on the game."

It was Alice who wanted the TV on. Damon, the leadoff hitter, stepped into the batter's box.

"Johnny Damon!" Alice exclaimed. "He'll hit a home run."

And Damon, his long brown locks flowing out the back of his batting helmet, did just that.

The Red Sox led, 3–0, in the bottom of the fifth inning when the Cardinals put a runner on third base with one out. Jaime could not stand the anxiety. His head hurt. He was having difficulty breathing. He broke out in hives. It was too much to take. He asked Alice to turn off the television. Alice insisted they watch until the end of the inning. They saw Lowe pitch out of the jam. Jaime nervously clicked off the TV.

At home in Waltham, George Sumner slipped in and out of sleep. His eyes were alert when the game was on, but when an inning ended he would say in a whisper, which was all he could muster, "Wake me up when the game comes back on." Each time no one could be certain if he would open his eyes again.

The Red Sox held their 3–0 lead, and the TV remained off in the delivery room of South Shore Hospital. At 11:27 p.m. Alice gave birth to a beautiful boy. Jaime noticed that the baby had unusually long hair down the back of his neck. The nurses cleaned and measured the boy. Jaime was still nervous.

"Can I check the TV for the final score?" he asked Alice.

"Sure," she said.

It was 11:40 p.m. The Red Sox were jumping upon one another in the middle of the diamond. They were world champions.

George Sumner had waited a lifetime to see this—79 years, to be exact, the last three while fighting cancer. He drew upon whatever strength was left in his body and in the loudest whisper that was possible he said, "Yippee!"

And then he closed his eyes and went to sleep.

"It was probably the last real conscious moment he ever had," Leah says.

George opened his eyes one last time the next day. When he did he saw that he was surrounded by his extended family. He said, "Hi," and went back to sleep for the final time.

George Sumner, avid Red Sox fan, passed away at 2:30 a.m. on Oct. 29. He was laid to rest with full military honors on Nov. 2.

On the day that George Sumner died, Alice and Jaime Andrews took home a healthy baby boy. They named him Damon.

JASON GROW (TOP); ROBERT BECK

Dear Red Sox:
Thank you, 2004 World Series Champs, Boston Red Sox.
It was worth the wait.

—CLOSING LINES OF THE OBITUARY FOR CYNTHIA MARIE RILEY-RUBINO IN A HAMDEN, CONN., NEWSPAPER, SENT TO THE TEAM BY ANOTHER FAN

BALLPLAYERS ARE not social scientists or cultural historians. Quite to the contrary, they create an insular fortress in which all considerations beyond the game itself are feared to carry the poison of what are known generically as "distractions."

The Red Sox are not from Boston; they come from all corners of the U.S. and Latin America, and flew to their real homes immediately after a huge, cathartic parade on Oct. 30, during which normal life in New England was basically TiVoed for three hours. ("Three and a half million people there *and* a 33 rating on TV!" marveled Steinberg.)

There is an awful imbalance to our relationship with athletes, as if we are looking through a one-way mirror. We know them, love them, dress like them and somehow believe our actions, however trivial, alter the outcome of theirs, all while they know only that we are there but cannot really see us.

Howard Frank Mosher of Vermont was in northern Maine in the summer of '03 for a book-signing, during which he discussed his upcoming novel, *Waiting for Teddy Williams*, a fanciful tale in which the Red Sox (can you imagine?) win the Series; he heard a small group of people singing in the back of the bookstore. It sounded like, *Johnny Angel, how I love him. . . .*

As Mosher drew closer he realized they were singing, *Johnny Damon, how I love him. . . .* What was going on? he wondered.

"We're performing an incantation," one of the men said. "Damon has been in a slump. We think it's working. He was 4 for 5 last night."

Crazy. How could Damon know this? How could any Boston player know that the Reverend William Bourke, an avid Sox fan who died in his native Rhode Island before Game 2 of the World Series, was buried the day after Boston won it all, with a commemorative Sox baseball and that morning's paper tucked into his casket?

How could Pedro Martinez know that on the morning of World Series Game 2, Dianne Connolly, her three-year-old son, Patrick, and the rest of the congregation of St. Francis of Assisi parish in Litchfield, N.H., heard the choir sing a prayer for the Red Sox after the recessional? "Our Father, who art in Fenway," the singers began. They continued, "Give us this day our perfect Pedro; and forgive those, like Bill Buckner; and lead us not into depression. . . ."

How could Curt Schilling know that Laura Deforge, 84, of Winooski, Vt., who watched every Red Sox game on TV—many of them *twice*—turned the ALCS around when she found a lucky, 30-year-old Red Sox hat in her closet after Game 3? Laura wore it everywhere for the next 11 days, including to bingo. (And she's still wearing it.)

"I've only been here a year," Schilling says, "and it's humbling to be a part of the relationship between Red Sox Nation and this team. I can't understand it all. I can't. All I can do is thank God that He blessed me with the skills that can have an impact on people's lives in some positive way."

The lives of these players are forever changed as professionals. Backup catcher Doug Mirabelli, for instance, will be a celebrity 30 years from now if he shows up anywhere from Woonsocket to Winooski. The '04 Red Sox have a sheen that will never fade or be surpassed.

The real resonance to this championship, however, is that it changed so many of the people on the other side of the one-way glass, poets and convicts, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, the dying and the newborn.

The dawn that broke over New England on Oct. 28, the first in the life of little Damon Andrews, was unlike any other seen in three generations. Here began the birth of a new Red Sox Nation, sons no longer bearing the scars and dread of their fathers and grandfathers. It felt as clean and fresh as New Year's Day.

Damon's first dawn also was the last in the fully lived life of George Sumner.

"I walked into work that day," Leah Sumner says, "and I had tears in my eyes. People were saying, 'Did he see it? Did he see it? Please tell me your dad saw it.' You don't understand how much comfort it gave my brothers and sisters. It would have been that much sadder if he didn't get to see it.

"It was like a blessing. One lady told me he lived and died by the hand of God. I'm not religious, but he was blessed. If he was sitting here, he would agree there was something stronger there.

"It was the best year, and it was the worst year. It was an unbelievable year. I will tell my children and make sure they tell their children."

The story they will tell is not just the story of George Sumner. It is not just the story of the 2004 Boston Red Sox. It is the story of the bond between a nation of fans and its beloved team.

"It's not even relief," Leah says. "No, it's like we were a part of it. It's not like they did it for themselves or for money or for fame, but like they did it for us.

"It's bigger than money. It's bigger than fame. It's who we are. It's like I tell people. There are three things you must know about me. I love my family. I love blues music. And I love baseball." □

Damon made women swoon and MEN CHEER and prompted a T-shirt and bumper sticker bonanza.

INSPIRATION After monitoring labor pains and Game 4 at the same time, Jaime and Alice named their son for the long-haired leadoff man.

PETER GREGOIRE (TOP); JOHN BIEVER

DARREN CARROLL (PETERSON); HEINZ KLUETMEIER (FAR RIGHT)

Call It the

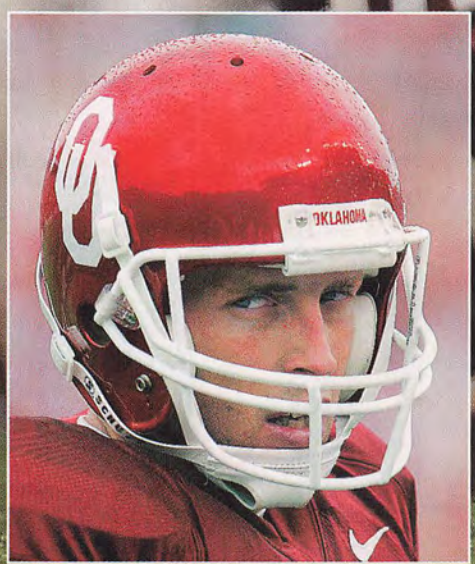
Good things have come in pairs this top four teams have *two* bona fide

BY AUSTIN MURPHY

Photograph by David E. Klutho

Twiceman

season as three of the nation's candidates for the **Heisman Trophy**



POWER OF TWO The passing of White (18 above, and inset right) has been revitalized by the running of Peterson (28, and inset opposite).

LIKE ANIMALS boarding the Ark, like bimbos in a beer commercial, 2004 Heisman Trophy candidates come in pairs. What's the deal with that? Why do so many of the top aspirants for this year's most outstanding player award have a teammate who's also in the running? Six of the season's strongest Heisman candidates are from three of the nation's top four programs—USC, Oklahoma and Cal—raising the question: How can an offense generate enough snaps and yards, such a superabundance of statistics, to fuel dueling Heisman candidacies? ¶ The answer:

Offensive football is not a zero-sum game. The featured back does not prosper at the expense of the quarterback, and vice versa—not, that is, if the guy calling the plays is any good. Over the course of a season, a balanced offense works the way a supply-side economy is supposed to: The more yards Jason White or Matt Leinart or Aaron Rodgers throws for, the more lanes are opened for his star running back. One hand washes the other, and before you know it, it's Dec. 11 and time for both guys to fly to New York City. For an example, take a look at Oklahoma this year.

If a rising tide lifts all boats, Jason White's ran aground late last season. This after he had torn it up for 12 games, throwing an outrageous 40 touchdown passes against only six interceptions. But even as he was running away with last year's Heisman race—indeed, because of it—the Sooners' offense developed a fundamental flaw: Seduced by all those easy yards through the air, Oklahoma forgot how to run the ball. The Sooners paid for it with defeats in the Big 12 title game, then in the BCS championship game.

White has heard the grim numbers for going on a year: In the losses to Kansas State and LSU he threw no touchdowns and four interceptions, two of which went for backbreaking TDs. Just as bad, the Sooners, who'd averaged 159.0 rushing yards to that point, managed just 67.5 in those two games. Fans and media turned on White. "I'd be walking in a mall, and someone would make a comment," White says. " 'Give back the Heisman,' that sort of thing. You hear something like that when you're with your family, it's embarrassing." On the other hand, he says, the abuse "gave me a reason to come back" as a sixth-year senior this fall.

Another reason was that help was on the way. In October 2003 Adrian Peterson, the pride of Palestine, Texas, and the nation's top schoolboy player that fall, was a guest of the Longhorns at their annual Red River Shootout against Oklahoma. Peterson was already leaning toward signing with the Sooners before he witnessed their 65–13 flaying of Texas that afternoon. Driving

The Trojans' Twin Horses

A steady passer and a spectacular back, each making the other look good, have USC sitting pretty

JOHN W. MCDONOUGH

USC QUARTERBACK Matt Leinart has passed to tailback Reggie Bush so often this season that Bush apparently felt it was time to toss something Leinart's way. "I'm throwing my support behind Matt for the Heisman," Bush said after the Trojans cruised to a 41–10 win over Notre Dame last Saturday. "There's no competition between the two of us. Matt deserves it more than anybody." Here was something that California's blue-state voters undoubtedly wished they'd heard a few weeks ago—a Bush concession speech.

Leinart may have separated himself not only from his teammate but also from the rest of the Heisman field with a near-flawless performance: 24 of 34 passing for 400 yards and five touchdowns. It was reminiscent of a similar late-season strafing of Notre Dame two years ago that locked up the Heisman for Carson Palmer, Leinart's predecessor.

Bush is content to be Leinart's running mate, helping him amass the kind of gaudy statistics—including 28 TD passes against only five interceptions—that Heisman voters notice. "It's almost unfair to look at my numbers," Leinart says, "because a lot of times I'm just throwing short to guys like Reggie and watching them stretch it." Leinart doesn't play near-

home, he got a call from a Longhorns assistant coach. "Coach, y'all got beat," said Peterson. "Y'all got beat *ba-a-a-a-d*."

It oversimplifies the case to say that once Peterson committed to Oklahoma, the Sooners' ground game was back in business. There was more to it than that. This year the offensive line returned intact, and White, whose 2001 and '02 seasons ended with ruptured ACLs (the left one in '01, the right in '02), was finally playing without pain.

In the second half of last season White's knees hurt so badly when he pushed off from under center that he was forced into the shotgun on most plays, putting a serious crimp in the offense. This year he's back under center: Bootlegs and play-action passes have returned to Oklahoma's arsenal. With White far sprightlier in the pocket, defenses have more to worry about.

Much, much more, for they must also account for the new guy wearing number 28. The day he arrived from Texas last June, Peterson was warmly welcomed by strength and conditioning coach Jerry Schmidt, who with a smile informed the 19-year-old that he wished to time him in the 40. Now? said Peterson. Yes, now, came the reply.

"He'd just stepped out of the car," says Schmidt. "I like to do that to guys, challenge 'em, see what they can do." Peterson, he recalls, was wearing "these heavy-ass, funky old hightops." The kid ran a 4.41 and a 4.42, clodhoppers and all, and has yet to stop making jaws drop.

Just as Austin Powers misplaced his mojo, the Sooners' offense had lost a measure of its masculinity. The arrival of Peterson dovetailed with coach Bob Stoops's primary goal: reestablishing the run, which Oklahoma had shunted to the background when Stoops brought his wide-open passing attack to Norman in 1999.

Mission accomplished. Oklahoma rushed for a total of 1,270 yards in its first five games (254 yards per outing) of 2004. In the first half of the third game, against Oregon, starting tailback Kejuan Jones, a junior, wrenched an ankle and went to the sideline. That ding allowed Oklahoma to dispense with the charade that its feature back was anyone other than Peterson. After averaging 136.5 yards rushing in his first four games, Peterson went wild against his former suitors, churning for 225 yards in the Sooners' 12–0 shutout of Texas on Oct. 9.

By that time Peterson's name was showing up in various Heisman polls, provoking debate among followers of the college game: Would it be kosher for a kid so young to win the Heisman? No freshman or sophomore ever has. But now elite first-year players, guys who have been leaving early for the NFL, are taking on an ever-increasing role in the college game. Smart coaches figure, If I'm only going to have this guy for three years, I'm going to get the most out of him right away. So why not give a Heisman to a freshman? As Peterson himself said last week, "If you're good, you're good."

While Peterson may prove to be this decade's Herschel Walker, he also got a little help from his friends. The linemen favor zone-blocking schemes, but it took Peterson awhile to get the hang of giving the big guys time to clear a hole. "He's learning every week," says center Vince Carter, "and he'll be the first one to tell you he has a long way to go. He'll break an 80-yard run and come to the sideline and ask us, 'Was that good? Was I tight enough to the double team?' He's always looking to improve. That's one of the best things about him."

Until Peterson figured out the pass-blocking schemes, he'd come out of the game on throwing downs. Now he stays in. "It's funny," says White. "If he misses a block and I get hit by his guy, he'll come up to me and say"—White impersonates the humble freshman—" 'Sorry, Jason.' "

Peterson may also be sorry for sucking some of the oxygen out of White's Heisman candidacy—about which the quarterback professes (convincingly) to care little. If Peterson gets it, "he deserves it," says White, who as a past Heisman winner has a vote. "I got one."

THAT STIFF-ARMED man cast in bronze sits on the mantel at his parents' home in Tuttle, Okla., mocking White just a little, reminding him of how the '03 season turned to ashes. Recalling the final two games of last season, members of the Big 12 media made Kansas State running back Darren Sproles their preseason offen-

ly as minor a role as he makes it sound. He and Bush enhance one another's talents. Bush, who has the soft hands of a receiver, often turns ordinary passes into scintillating scores, and Leinart maximizes Bush's chances to do that by delivering the ball so accurately that Bush almost always catches it in full stride.

Case in point: a 69-yard pass play in the third quarter against Notre Dame. Leinart lofted the ball down the right sideline, and Bush, coming out of the backfield, caught it on the dead run. He faked out one would-be tackler and outran another on his way to the end zone. "Matt put that ball right on the money," Bush said. "That's the difference between a nice gain and a touchdown."

Although Bush, a sophomore, elevated himself into Heisman consideration with his big-play ability, he always considered himself a long-shot candidate compared with Leinart, a junior who may turn pro after the season. Leinart benefits from having been the Trojans' prime Heisman candidate heading into the season, and because the Trojans have so many dangerous backs and receivers, Bush doesn't get the ball often enough to compile Heisman-like numbers. He has 629 yards rushing and 405 receiving, but more important, opponents have to be wary of all his talents.

"I shouldn't be saying this because I might be playing against both of them again next year," said one Notre Dame player, "but even though Leinart's probably going to win the Heisman, Bush is the guy you worry about all week before the game."

Truth is, either one of the Trojans' Heisman candidates can cause an opponent to have sleepless nights, but in tandem they're a nightmare. —*Phil Taylor*

LINE OF SUCCESSION Leinart (opposite) was USC's trophy player from season's start, while Bush has set himself up for next year.

JON SOOHOO/WIREIMAGE.COM; MANNY MILLAN (TROPHY)

sive player of the year. The guy with the Heisman even had to share preseason all-conference quarterback honors with Missouri's Brad Smith. Those slights did not surprise White, considering the abuse he'd absorbed in the off-season. "After everything that was said about me after the last two games," he says, "I have a whole new outlook. I'm much tougher mentally."

So he was happy to hand off the ball more at the start of this season, passing a couple of dozen times a game rather than the 32 attempts he averaged in '03. "If we'd won all our games last season," he says, "I might have felt a little constrained—you know, 'Hey, it worked last year.' Now I realize what we needed."

"Having the running game we do takes a lot of pressure off Jason," says J.D. Runnels, the Sooners' superb fullback. It also takes some pressure off White's bodyguards. On certain bootlegs and play-action calls, says Runnels, "the defense is so worried about the run game, we don't even have to block anybody."

Following Peterson's performance against Texas, opposing defensive coordinators started loading the box against the run, so White began airing it out. In Oklahoma's last six games he averaged 34 attempts and 289 passing yards. After throwing nine touchdown passes over the first five games, White threw 21 over the next six.

The Sooners' two-pronged attack was best exemplified at Oklahoma State on Oct. 30. The Cowboys stuffed Peterson in the first half, holding him to 53 yards on 14 carries. "So we threw on 'em," says White, who fired three first-half touchdowns. "In the second half they took away the throw, and we started running on 'em." Midway through the third quarter Peterson busted loose for a spectacular 80-yard touchdown run, and the next time he touched the ball, he went for 56 yards. He finished with a season-high 249 yards in a 38–35 win.

The day after that victory in Stillwater, the Oklahoma quarterback lost his grandfather, George White. The funeral was the following Wednesday in Defiance, Mo. A delayed flight out of Oklahoma City forced Jason and his sister, Jennifer, to drive all night. One of the speakers at the service dwelled on how proud George was of his grandson. As Jason's father, Ron, told the *Tulsa World*, "Jason lost it then."

Three days later, in front of 81,000 fans

All Is Not Golden for These Bears

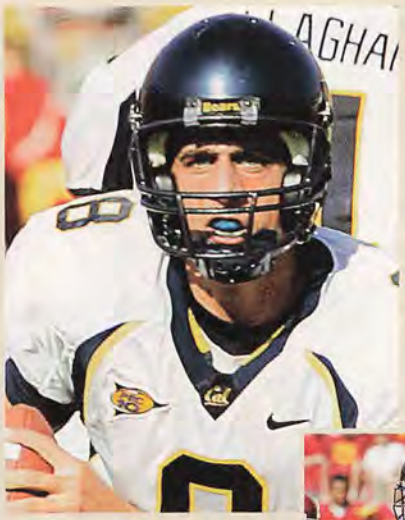
Cal's Aaron Rodgers and J.J. Arrington have the numbers, but not the national profiles

THE CHANT went up in the north end zone of Memorial Stadium after Cal had punked visiting Stanford in the Big Game, 41–6, on Nov. 20. While quarterback Aaron Rodgers and running back J.J. Arrington posed for a picture at the mouth of the tunnel, a delirious (and possibly deluded) mob of Bears fans shouted over and over, "Heisman! Heisman!"

Yes, but for which one? For Arrington, the mild-mannered senior with 10 straight games of more than 100 rushing yards and the top yards-per-carry average (6.8) in the country—the guy who late in the first quarter against Stanford broke Cal's 29-year-old single-season rushing record of 1,460 yards?

Or should the trophy go to Rodgers, the swashbuckling junior who, just before posing with Arrington, had been held aloft and joyously passed through the crowd on the hands of a sea of students? Rodgers had the top passing-efficiency rating in the Pac-10 (164.0), went over 2,000 passing yards for the year against the Cardinal and had a 69.1 completion percentage. In a narrow loss to top-ranked Southern Cal on Oct. 9, he connected on his first 23 passes, tying an NCAA record, and outplayed Trojans counterpart Matt Leinart.

Through no fault of their own, the Heisman most likely will not go to either of the Bears. Against Stanford, a game in which he needed to put up big numbers to get into the mix with Leinart and Jason White, Rodgers threw all of 14 passes, completing 11, including one for a touchdown. The strategy made sense:



COMBO PLATTER Rodgers (8) has connected on 69% of his passes; Arrington has 10 straight 100-yard games.

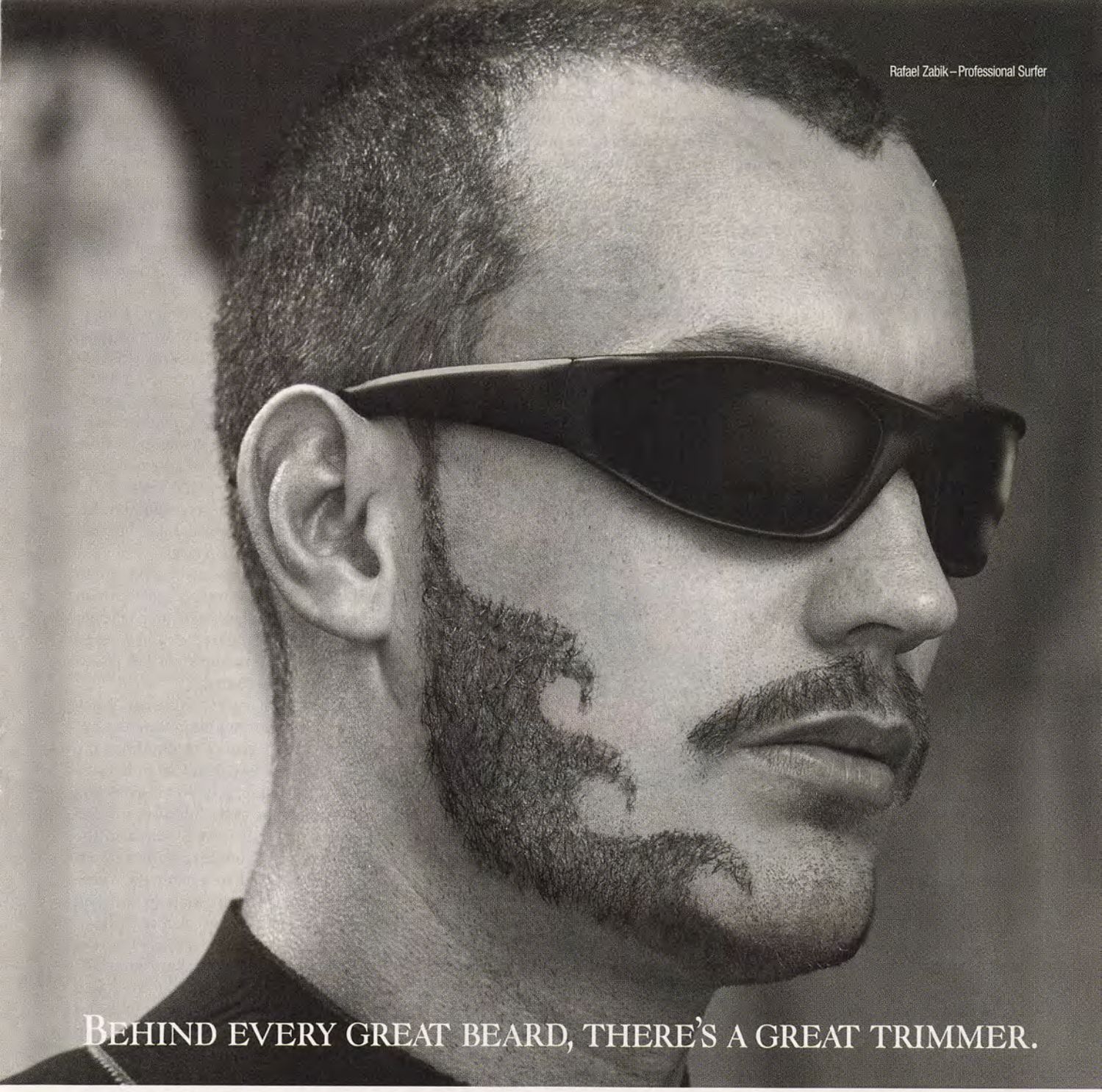
Stanford had surprised the Bears by deploying what Cal coach Jeff Tedford called some "nice pressure packages," behind which they kept two safeties in a two-deep zone.

With Rodgers's arm effectively taken out of the game, Arrington was able to shine. He rushed for 169 yards on 27 carries, upping his season total to 1,584 yards. Despite his terrific numbers, though, Arrington is no sure bet to even be called to New York City as one of the five finalists. You figure White, Leinart and Oklahoma's Adrian Peterson are locks. That leaves two slots, and Utah quarterback Alex Smith and Texas running back Cedric Benson aren't splitting votes with teammates.

Even in that milestone game against Stanford, Arrington was overshadowed by his freshman teammate Marshawn Lynch, an electrifying runner who needed just nine carries to cover 122 yards. While Tedford concedes that Arrington may be less spectacular to watch than other backs, including Lynch, he insists that "consistency needs to be factored into" Heisman voters' calculations. "If you look around the country, it would be hard to find a guy as consistent as J.J."

If you looked around the locker room after the game, you saw a single reporter speaking to Arrington, while a small mob peppered Lynch and Rodgers with questions. "Although I'd like to open it up and throw for 300 yards," Rodgers said into a thicket of microphones, "I'm going to lead this offense however I can. If we're winning, I'm happy." After the crowd around him had thinned, he was more candid about how this game had affected his Heisman chances. "Deep down," he said, "it's a little disappointing." —A.M.

PETER READ MILLER (2)



Only Remington's® Titanium VacuumTrim™ combines titanium-coated blades with a powerful vacuum system to end messy cleanup. It's the ultimate in precision trimming.

REMINGTON® TITANIUM VACUUM TRIM

It could just make all other trimmers obsolete.

www.remington-products.com

©2004 RPC, LLC

in Texas A&M's Kyle Field, on an afternoon custom-made for an upset, White did not lose it. Twice the Aggies scored on fake kicks. Three times the Sooners trailed by 14 points. Each time White brought them back. "When we were down, he never panicked," says Peterson. "I looked at him, and it made me more relaxed."

"It was weird down on the field," White recalls. "It was like the offense didn't feel worried." In the moments before Oklahoma's most crucial possession of the season, "Jason's voice was strong, his demeanor was very steady," says Sooners offensive coordinator Chuck Long. "You could just tell this was his moment." White threw five touchdown passes that day. The final one, a 39-yard strike on a broken play to receiver Mark Bradley with 6:43 left in the game, provided the 42–35 margin of victory.

Those two heart-palpitating road wins and White's performance in both—eight touchdowns, no picks—would have revived his hopes of winning another Heisman *if* he spent any time actually thinking about doing so. Instead, he is entirely focused on this Saturday's Big 12 championship against Colorado, and the game after that.

SO WHO'LL win the Heisman? Leinart may have pulled into the lead with his huge night against Notre Dame, a school that has lately been doomed to boosting the candidacies of opponents (see: Palmer, Carson). Peterson tied an NCAA freshman record by rushing for more than 100 yards 10 times this year, including three 200-plus-yard games. With a monster game against the Buffaloes in the national spotlight this Saturday, Peterson could pull ahead of the quarterbacks in the Heisman race.

White has 30 touchdown passes to Leinart's 28. White's total is 10 fewer than he had in '03, but he's been more efficient this year, completing 64.3% of his passes, up from 61.6%. Most important, he's poised to finish what he started.

For White it started 6½ years ago. A day after returning from senior week in Cancún after high school graduation, the 18-year-old passer paid a visit to his new coaches at Oklahoma. "I wasn't expecting to work out," he says. But after a bit of cheerful banter he was directed to the equipment room, outfitted with workout gear and directed to a sand pit where Schmidt was putting some grim-faced Sooners through a series of cruel drills.

White was soon one hurting pup. "I'm sweating out a solid week of fun out there," he recalls. Two hours later he stood in a shower stall trembling with fatigue and covered with sand. At home that afternoon he had misgivings about signing with Oklahoma, lamenting at one point, "This could be the worst thing I've ever done."

"Well, boy," said Ron, who pours concrete for a living. "I've always got a shovel out there with your name on it."

White didn't quit then, just as he didn't give up after his surgeries, just as he ignored those who wanted him to hang it up after last season. If there were a trophy for resilience, he'd have sewn it up by Halloween.

"I don't even care about the 11 games we just played," he says. "It's these next two that I want." His smile takes only a little of the edge off what comes out of his mouth next: "I want to shut people up." □

KEN LEVINE/WIREIMAGE.COM

King of the Mountains

The man who runs the offensive show for unbeaten Utah, quarterback Alex Smith stands alone as a Heisman candidate

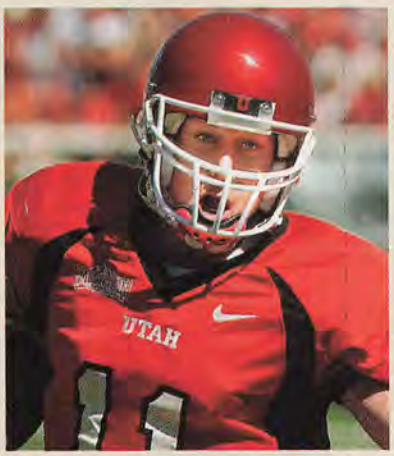
THE WILD CARD in the Heisman race has a shy smile, pencils for legs and study habits so laudable that he earned a bachelor's degree in economics in two years. During games he recognizes and cuts through defensive schemes with a surgeon's precision, and when interviewed he deflects praise to everyone but the person with the tape recorder.

That's not typical football-star behavior, but as the quarterback who led BCS outsider Utah to an 11–0 record and a likely Fiesta Bowl berth, junior Alex Smith is a star just the same. A stroll across campus earns the Davey O'Brien Award finalist cheers from passersby, while the Utes' official website carries the corny slogan DEFENSES CAN'T PICK ALEX SMITH, BUT HEISMAN VOTERS CAN.

Smith regards these manifestations of his newfound popularity a little sheepishly. Back at Helix High in La Mesa, Calif., tailback Reggie Bush was the player who had Heisman potential. Smith was merely the guy who handed off to him. "Did I ever think this could happen?" says Smith of being considered along with Bush for national player of the year. "Never, not in my wildest dreams."

Smith's candidacy took off in mid-October, when he threw four TD passes and ran for another score in a 46–16 win over North Carolina. Whereas Smith spent much of the fall of 2003 just trying to absorb coach Urban Meyer's explosive spread-option offense, this year "he began to know instinctively what play was needed," says quarterbacks coach Dan Mullen. Smith now has such a grasp of the Utah attack that on 117 of the 120 plays the Utes had ready for BYU, he was asked to read the defense at the line and make the call to pass, hand off or dart downfield himself.

"As soon as you feel like you have something going defensively, Smith will throw an unbelievable ball where you least expect it," says Arizona defensive coordinator Mark Stoops, whose Wildcats fell to the Utes 23–6 in September. "He runs as diversified an offense as I've seen."



TWO-PRONGED ASSAULT Smith has thrown 28 touchdown passes and run for 10 scores in the spread-option offense.

That's reflected in his stat line. In Utah's 11 wins Smith completed 185 of 280 passes (66.1%) for 2,624 yards and 28 TDs while throwing just four interceptions. Utah's most dangerous runner, he also gained 563 yards on the ground and scored 10 touchdowns. Smith is second in the nation in passing efficiency and, according to his coaches, No. 1 in leadership. "The guys at USC and Oklahoma have so many weapons," says Mullen. "For us to win, Alex has to play at the highest level. Through 11 games he's done just that."

The biggest knock on Smith is that those games weren't very tough: The Utes are 94th out of 117 in the NCAA's strength-of-schedule rankings. But if Utah is worthy of a BCS bowl, its best player must be among the elite too. —*Kelley King*

WE CAPTURED THE SPIRIT,
BUT DIDN'T TRY TO TAME IT.
GT
Ford
MUSTANG
Built for the road ahead.
fordvehicles.com

THE HANG OF IT Hill is still learning to elevate again, but he has quickly regained his scoring touch.

Old Heights

After five ankle operations and four lost seasons, forward Grant Hill has returned to the Magic, exhibiting a familiar all-around brilliance

BY CHRIS BALLARD

Photograph by Bob Rosato

LAST WEEK on a three-on-two fast-break drill during an Orlando Magic practice, Grant Hill filled the lane and finished with a dunk. This shouldn't have been especially notable; after all, Hill is 6' 8", and he's been jamming half his life. Still, the flush touched off quite the impromptu celebration. His teammates applauded, his coaches whooped, and Hill took off on a victory lap around the court, grinning all the way. Streamers and confetti did not fall from the rafters, but they might as well have. "It wasn't a great dunk," Hill said afterward, "but"—he paused for effect—"it *was* a dunk." ¶ To understand why a very tall man dunking a basketball would be remarkable, one must

first appreciate what Hill has been through: the five left-ankle surgeries in four years; the thousands of hours doing water aerobics alongside senior citizens; the electrostimulator machine he wore to bed every night, promising his wife, Tamia, that he would let it vibrate for only half an hour; the clamor in Orlando that he abandon his comeback so that the Magic, like heartbroken lovers, could move on and find someone new; and most of all, the chilling day a year and a half ago when he was taken into the hospital on a stretcher, delirious, Tamia fearing for his life, after he developed a dangerously high fever in reaction to the latest surgery. After all that, it's clear why the 32-year-old Hill's rising above the rim and throwing down for the initial time this season (he got his first dunk in a game only last Saturday, against the Philadelphia 76ers) was an inspiring sight, another step in a comeback that Orlando coach Johnny Davis calls "a minor miracle."

WHEEL BAD Hill hobbled through a 2000 playoff game with Detroit, little knowing that the injury would leave his leg disfigured.

Yes, injuries may have rendered Hill relatively hopless, but reserve your sympathy for those who have to guard him: In remarkably short order the rest of his game has returned to All-Star form. Through Monday, Hill was averaging 20.1 points, 5.4 rebounds and 4.1 assists and had led the surprising Magic to an 8–5 start. Relying on midrange jumpers and a first step as quick as ever, he'd already regained his stature as one of the toughest small forwards to cover. "He looks the same to me, though his jump shot's probably a little better," says Portland Trail Blazers coach Maurice Cheeks.

"He's playing like he took a month off, not four years," says a scout who saw Hill play recently. Adds Indiana Pacers coach Rick Carlisle, whose team Hill torched for 28 points on Nov. 20, "It is a great story."

In fact there is something of a Grant Hill love-in raging across the league, his tale of perseverance serving as a welcome counterpoint to the Nov. 19 melee in Detroit between Pistons fans and certain Pacers. Hill is Everything That Is Right with the NBA. So he receives a line of well-wishers before games, a steady stream of shoulder bumps (an NBA player's equivalent to sending flowers) from opponents and cheers from enemy crowds. "Even in Philly," Hill says incredulously. For those players who were kids when Hill was starring with the Pistons, his return is particularly exciting—like finding out that, four years after it went off the air, *Seinfeld* is coming back.

"I remember watching him at Duke, and I saw his first points with Detroit," said 23-year-old forward Darius Miles in the Portland locker room after an 89–83 win at Orlando on Nov. 24. "And you know what? He's still faster than a mother------!"

"Grant Hill," chimed in 23-year-old forward Zach Randolph, "is the *Truth*!"

"The Truth!" seconded Miles, fairly throwing up his hands in hallelujah.

"It's amazing," weighed in forward Shareef Abdur-Rahim, a relatively grizzled veteran, at 28, from across the room. "Think of what he did before he even got to Orlando—that's a great *career* for a lot of guys. A lot of people would have packed it in."

That brings up a very good question: Why *didn't* Hill pack it in? He has millions in the bank; a beautiful wife who's a four-time Grammy nominee; a two-year-old daughter, Myla; and the beginnings of several postbasketball careers, including real estate developer and art collector. "That is *the* question, isn't it?" says former Magic general manager John Gabriel, now a Portland scout, shaking his head. "And I don't know the answer, other than to say it's the same thing that makes him such a good person."

THE FIRST injury was a broken left ankle in the opening round of the 2000 playoffs. During the regular season Hill had averaged 25.8 points, 6.6 rebounds and 5.2 assists for the Pistons and drawn comparisons with Michael Jordan (ill-fitting) and Magic Johnson (more like it). Doctors inserted a three-hole plate and five screws to support the bone. That summer Detroit moved Hill in a sign-and-trade; Orlando took on his cap-munching seven-year, $93 million contract. The Magic was replacing its squad of scrappers with a two-star system: Hill and Tracy McGrady. Four games into his Orlando career, Hill began to suffer extreme pain. So he had his second operation, in which a piece of bone from his hip was grafted to his ankle.

"Think of what he did before he even got to Orlando—that's a great *career* for a lot of guys," says Abdur-Rahim. "A lot of people **WOULD HAVE PACKED IT IN.**"

When bone spurs inflamed the joint, Hill had surgery number 3 in December 2001. A year later he played 29 solid games before soreness forced him to shut it down again. Doctors discovered a new crack, and in March 2003 Hill went to Dr. James Nunley at Duke for surgery number 4. Nunley took out all the screws, broke Hill's heel and removed a wedge of bone to relieve pressure on the ankle. He solidified the joint with a new plate and five four-inch screws.

A week later, recuperating at home in Orlando, Hill became cold while watching TV. "He'd been having some night sweats, so we figured his body was just working out the toxins," says Tamia. She brought blankets, but his teeth kept chattering. Tamia took his temperature: 104°. She tried

DAVID BERGMAN/MIAMI HERALD/AP; GARY BOGDON (INSET)

Hey Mister...

Look what you can get if you've been good this year.

These great movies on DVD of course! All available now.

www.paramount.com/homeentertainment

Availability subject to change without notice. TM, ® & Copyright © 2004 by Paramount Pictures. All Rights Reserved.

another thermometer: 104.5°. "That's when I started to worry," she says.

By the time Tamia got Grant to the hospital, he was incoherent. Doctors met him with a stretcher and had to restrain him in the ER. "I was losing it, just bawling," says Tamia. "At that point it wasn't about basketball anymore. It was about keeping him around. It put everything into perspective."

Like a piece of Scotch tape pulled off and reapplied one too many times, Hill's skin was no longer holding together. The incision on his ankle hadn't healed, and he had developed a staph infection. Hill underwent a seven-hour surgery in which doctors grafted skin and muscle from his left triceps to patch up his ankle. (Look at the arm today, and you'll see a long, slightly raised scar, as if someone had dug a divot down to his elbow, then tried to pack the dirt back in.) For two months he took thrice-daily intravenous doses of vancomycin, a powerful antibiotic. "After going through that, it was, like, I have to come back now," says Hill. "Part of me was, like, Is it worth it? But then I decided I'd been through too much not to give it one last try. It made me realize I had to get this thing right. I had to get healthy."

This time Hill didn't rush it. He headed back to the pool, where he and Magic forward Pat Garrity, who was rehabbing from a right-knee injury, swam laps and did range-of-motion exercises. For motivation Hill read the stories of others, from Abe Lincoln and Lance Armstrong. ("I know [Armstrong's] story so well, I feel like I know *him*," says Hill.) Although cleared to play last spring, he waited. Then, this summer, he sent a message to new Magic G.M. John Weisbrod: Come to Duke. "It was two-on-two, three-on-three against guys like Corey Maggette, Shane Battier, Elton Brand," Weisbrod says of the workouts in Durham. "Grant hadn't played basketball in four years, and he was dominant." Even though Weisbrod says he was "giddy behind closed doors," he didn't let on in public, keeping in mind the fans, who felt as if they were stuck in a cycle of raised hopes and inevitable disappointment. Call it *GrantHog Day*.

It's hard to blame them. Management had promised a new era of stardom and success—Shaq and Penny II—but by last season's end Orlando was the NBA's worst team (21–61); coach Doc Rivers had been run out of town; columnists were referring to McGrady as Me-Mac; and the team was playing to half-full arenas. There was talk of Hill's being left unprotected in the expansion draft (Weisbrod says it was never seriously discussed) and of the team's buying out his contract. To many kids around town Hill was so unknown that they would peer up at him and ask, "Do you play basketball?"

Now he's back, and the question inevitably is, for how long? The best sign for Orlando is that Hill, who two years ago called ice "my best buddy," no longer straps on the bags, even after games. "I figure I've done enough icing in the last four years to last a lifetime," he says. While Hill claims he doesn't think about his injury during games, Weisbrod admits that "my cellphone rings whenever he makes a grimace on TV."

The ankle itself is a sight to behold, permanently swollen and discolored, like a piece of fruit gone bad. Curving, serrated scars rise from below Hill's hightops, reaching up his shin. "I used to wear high socks and cover up the scars," says Hill. "Now I'm, like, it's who I am, it's what I've been through. If people want to stare at it and it looks ugly, I couldn't care less."

THERE ARE those who believe that Hill's injuries had a silver lining. "He matured as a person," Tamia says. "It was the first time in his career that something was taken from him." Weisbrod agrees: "In a lot of weird ways all that adversity has made him a better player, certainly a better leader."

Hill, a slasher in his Detroit days, has modified his game, partly out of necessity and partly by design. Whereas he used to attack the basket, now he pulls up short for a soft jumper or a leaner, often coming off curls in the Magic's 1–4 motionlike offense. The midrange jump shot, never his

JULIAN GONZALEZ/DETROIT FREE PRESS (FAR LEFT); TINA FINEBERG/AP

DREAM MATES Hill struck gold at the Atlanta Games in 1996, then married gold-selling R&B singer Tamia three years later.

While Hill claims he **DOESN'T THINK ABOUT HIS INJURY** during games, G.M. Weisbrod admits that "my cellphone rings whenever he makes a grimace on TV."

FOOD AND FAMILY.
The 2 sources of cholesterol.

VYTORIN
treats them both.

You probably know that cholesterol comes from food. But what you might not know is that your cholesterol has a lot to do with your family history.

Now there's VYTORIN. When diet and exercise aren't enough, adding VYTORIN can help.

VYTORIN helps block the absorption of cholesterol that comes from food *and* reduces the cholesterol that your body makes naturally. And VYTORIN can dramatically lower your bad cholesterol 45%–60%. (Average effect depending on dose. 52% at the usual starting dose.)

Ask your doctor about NEW VYTORIN.

Important information: VYTORIN is a prescription tablet and isn't right for everyone, including women who are nursing or pregnant or who may become pregnant, and anyone with liver problems. Unexplained muscle pain or weakness could be a sign of a rare but serious side effect and should be reported to your doctor right away. VYTORIN may interact with other medicines or certain foods, increasing your risk of getting this serious side effect. So, tell your doctor about any other medications you are taking.

To learn more, call
1-877-VYTORIN or visit vytorin.com

Please read the Patient Product Information on the adjacent page.

NEW VYTORIN™
(ezetimibe/simvastatin)

Treat the 2 sources of cholesterol.

Merck/Schering-Plough Patient Assistance Program

MERCK / Schering-Plough Pharmaceuticals

To find out if you qualify call 1-800-347-7503.

©Merck/Schering-Plough Pharmaceuticals, 2004. All rights reserved. 20450925(1)(000)-VYT

VYTORIN™ (ezetimibe/simvastatin) Tablets

Patient Information about VYTORIN (VI-tor-in)
Generic name: ezetimibe/simvastatin tablets

Read this information carefully before you start taking VYTORIN. Review this information each time you refill your prescription for VYTORIN as there may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your medical condition or your treatment. If you have any questions about VYTORIN, ask your doctor. Only your doctor can determine if VYTORIN is right for you.

What is VYTORIN?

VYTORIN is a medicine used to lower levels of total cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol, and fatty substances called triglycerides in the blood. In addition, VYTORIN raises levels of HDL (good) cholesterol. It is used for patients who cannot control their cholesterol levels by diet alone. You should stay on a cholesterol-lowering diet while taking this medicine.

VYTORIN works to reduce your cholesterol in two ways. It reduces the cholesterol absorbed in your digestive tract, as well as the cholesterol your body makes by itself. VYTORIN does not help you lose weight.

Who should not take VYTORIN?

Do not take VYTORIN:

- If you are allergic to ezetimibe or simvastatin, the active ingredients in VYTORIN, or to the inactive ingredients. For a list of inactive ingredients, see the "Inactive ingredients" section at the end of this information sheet.
- If you have active liver disease or repeated blood tests indicating possible liver problems.
- If you are pregnant, or think you may be pregnant, or planning to become pregnant or breast-feeding.

VYTORIN is not recommended for use in children under 10 years of age.

What should I tell my doctor before and while taking VYTORIN?

Tell your doctor right away if you experience unexplained muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness. This is because on rare occasions, muscle problems can be serious, including muscle break-down resulting in kidney damage.

The risk of muscle breakdown is greater at higher doses of VYTORIN.

The risk of muscle breakdown is greater in patients with kidney problems.

Taking VYTORIN with certain substances can increase the risk of muscle problems. It is particularly important to tell your doctor if you are taking any of the following:

- cyclosporine
- antifungal agents (such as itraconazole or ketoconazole)
- fibric acid derivatives (such as gemfibrozil, bezafibrate, or fenofibrate)
- the antibiotics erythromycin and clarithromycin
- HIV protease inhibitors (such as indinavir, nelfinavir, ritonavir, and saquinavir)
- the antidepressant nefazodone
- amiodarone (a drug used to treat an irregular heartbeat)
- verapamil (a drug used to treat high blood pressure, chest pain associated with heart disease, or other heart conditions)
- large doses (≥1 g/day) of niacin or nicotinic acid
- large quantities of grapefruit juice (>1 quart daily)

It is also important to tell your doctor if you are taking coumarin anticoagulants (drugs that prevent blood clots, such as warfarin).

Tell your doctor about any prescription and nonprescription medicines you are taking or plan to take, including natural or herbal remedies.

Tell your doctor about all your medical conditions including allergies.

Tell your doctor if you:

- drink substantial quantities of alcohol or ever had liver problems. VYTORIN may not be right for you.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. Do not use VYTORIN if you are pregnant, trying to become pregnant or suspect that you are pregnant. If you become pregnant while taking VYTORIN, stop taking it and contact your doctor immediately.
- are breast-feeding. Do not use VYTORIN if you are breast-feeding.

Tell other doctors prescribing a new medication that you are taking VYTORIN.

How should I take VYTORIN?

- Take VYTORIN once a day, in the evening, with or without food.
- Try to take VYTORIN as prescribed. If you miss a dose, do not take an extra dose. Just resume your usual schedule.
- Continue to follow a cholesterol-lowering diet while taking VYTORIN. Ask your doctor if you need diet information.
- Keep taking VYTORIN unless your doctor tells you to stop. If you stop taking VYTORIN, your cholesterol may rise again.

What should I do in case of an overdose?

Contact your doctor immediately.

What are the possible side effects of VYTORIN?

See your doctor regularly to check your cholesterol level and to check for side effects. Your doctor may do blood tests to check your liver before you start taking VYTORIN and during treatment.

In clinical studies patients reported the following common side effects while taking VYTORIN: headache and muscle pain (see What should I tell my doctor before and while taking VYTORIN?).

The following side effects have been reported in general use with either ezetimibe or simvastatin tablets (tablets that contain the active ingredients of VYTORIN):

- allergic reactions including swelling of the face, lips, tongue, and/or throat that may cause difficulty in breathing or swallowing (which may require treatment right away), and rash; inflammation of the pancreas; nausea; gallstones; inflammation of the gallbladder.

Tell your doctor if you are having these or any other medical problems while on VYTORIN. This is not a complete list of side effects. For a complete list, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

General Information about VYTORIN

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for conditions that are not mentioned in patient information leaflets. Do not use VYTORIN for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give VYTORIN to other people, even if they have the same condition you have. It may harm them.

This summarizes the most important information about VYTORIN. If you would like more information, talk with your doctor. You can ask your pharmacist or doctor for information about VYTORIN that is written for health professionals. For additional information, visit the following web site: vytorin.com.

Inactive ingredients:
Butylated hydroxyanisole NF, citric acid monohydrate USP, croscarmellose sodium NF, hydroxypropyl methyl-cellulose USP, lactose monohydrate NF, magnesium stearate NF, microcrystalline cellulose NF, and propyl gallate NF.

Issued July 2004

MERCK / Schering-Plough Pharmaceuticals

Manufactured for:
Merck/Schering-Plough
Pharmaceuticals
North Wales, PA 19454, USA

By:
MSD Technology Singapore Pte. Ltd.
Singapore 637766

20450925(1)(000)-VYT

The Will To Return

After a near-fatal accident, Jay Williams is on his feet and in a rush to play again

JAY WILLIAMS can hear the doubters whispering when he walks into a room. *Can he ever be the point guard he was? Will he even play again? Would any team sign him?* The questions haunt him because he doesn't know whether he'll ever regain the speed and explosiveness that made the Chicago Bulls draft him No. 2 in 2002. What he does know is that, like fellow Duke alum Grant Hill, he has gladly endured the tedium of rehab for a shot at returning to the NBA.

On June 19, 2003, only two months after a rookie season in which he averaged 9.5 points and 4.7 assists, Williams lost control of his new Yamaha R6 motorcycle and crashed into a utility pole in Chicago. The impact fractured his pelvis, severed a major nerve in his left leg and tore three of the four main ligaments in his left knee. "What I remember most while I was lying there was saying over and over, 'I threw it all away,' " recalls Williams. "It wasn't until I got to the hospital that I thought, Forget basketball, I could die from this." After doctors briefly considered amputating the leg, he underwent two pelvic surgeries and an operation to repair his knee. While immobilized for two months in Chicago and Durham, N.C., hospitals, his left quad withered to the size of his forearm. "I used to look at it and wonder, What is that?" says Williams. "It was like someone had taken my leg and left me with someone else's."

Williams didn't have full range of motion in his leg until last May, when he began light workouts that included using an elliptical climber. "I passed out a minute after I got on that thing," says Williams. "Out cold. My body just wasn't used to working so hard." He's now able to train hard up to four hours a day, jogging for 20 minutes and shooting 100 to 150 jump shots before heading to the weight room with his two personal trainers. He says his knee is 100% but that his left foot is slow to recover after workouts. Last month the 6' 2", 195-pound Williams dunked for the first time since the accident.

HILLUVA TIME Like his fellow Dookie, Williams will have to rehab like mad to regain the form he flashed as a rookie.

In addition to the rehab, Williams is studying to take the Series 6 exam, which would qualify him to sell mutual funds and annuities, and he will work 20 games as a college basketball analyst for ESPN. Because the collective bargaining agreement prohibits players from riding motorcycles, the Bulls had the right to void the remaining two years and $7.7 million on Williams's contract. Instead they generously gave him $3 million and extended his health-insurance coverage for six months.

The Bulls, along with the Houston Rockets and the Atlanta Hawks, have inquired about Williams's health in the last month. He's hoping to suit up again by the start of next season. "I feel like I can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel," says Williams. "I know I can make it back." —*Chris Mannix*

forte, is now his primary weapon; at times he looks Rip Hamiltonesque. "He can create space against anyone," says Garrity. "He gets guys on their heels and then pops up."

Hill says he learned his new style—think of a power pitcher suddenly relying on splitters and changeups—from watching Jordan become a more efficient player by using angles and improving his jump shot. "He got crafty as he got older," Hill says of Jordan. He smiles. "I like crafty."

Crafty or not, what is striking about Hill is the way he moves. On back-to-back plays against Portland he raced out and got behind Abdur-Rahim for layups. Against Indiana four nights earlier he sprinted the length of the floor to intercept a pass and, in the same motion, passed the ball behind his back to a trailing teammate to start a fast break, a play so beautifully timed that it looked choreographed. True, Hill can't really jump yet—it's weird to see him rooted to the floor as opponents sky for rebounds—but levitation is one of many gifts he's on his way to regaining, along with explosiveness, lateral movement, and the ability to quick-jump for rebounds and front in the post. "It's like an onion," he says. "I'm peeling back the layers as I rediscover my game."

In large part because of Hill's play, the Magic is being touted as a contender in the Eastern Conference. This adds a nice element to the Return of Grant saga, but there's one problem: It's not quite true. The team has a nice young mix with rookie forward Dwight Howard, point guard Steve Francis and swingmen Hedo Turkoglu and Cuttino Mobley, but there's not enough depth and experience for Orlando to be an elite team. That much is evident whenever Hill goes out of the game; suddenly the offense grinds to a halt. Still, compared with last season's, it is a vastly improved squad, largely because of Hill's unexpected presence.

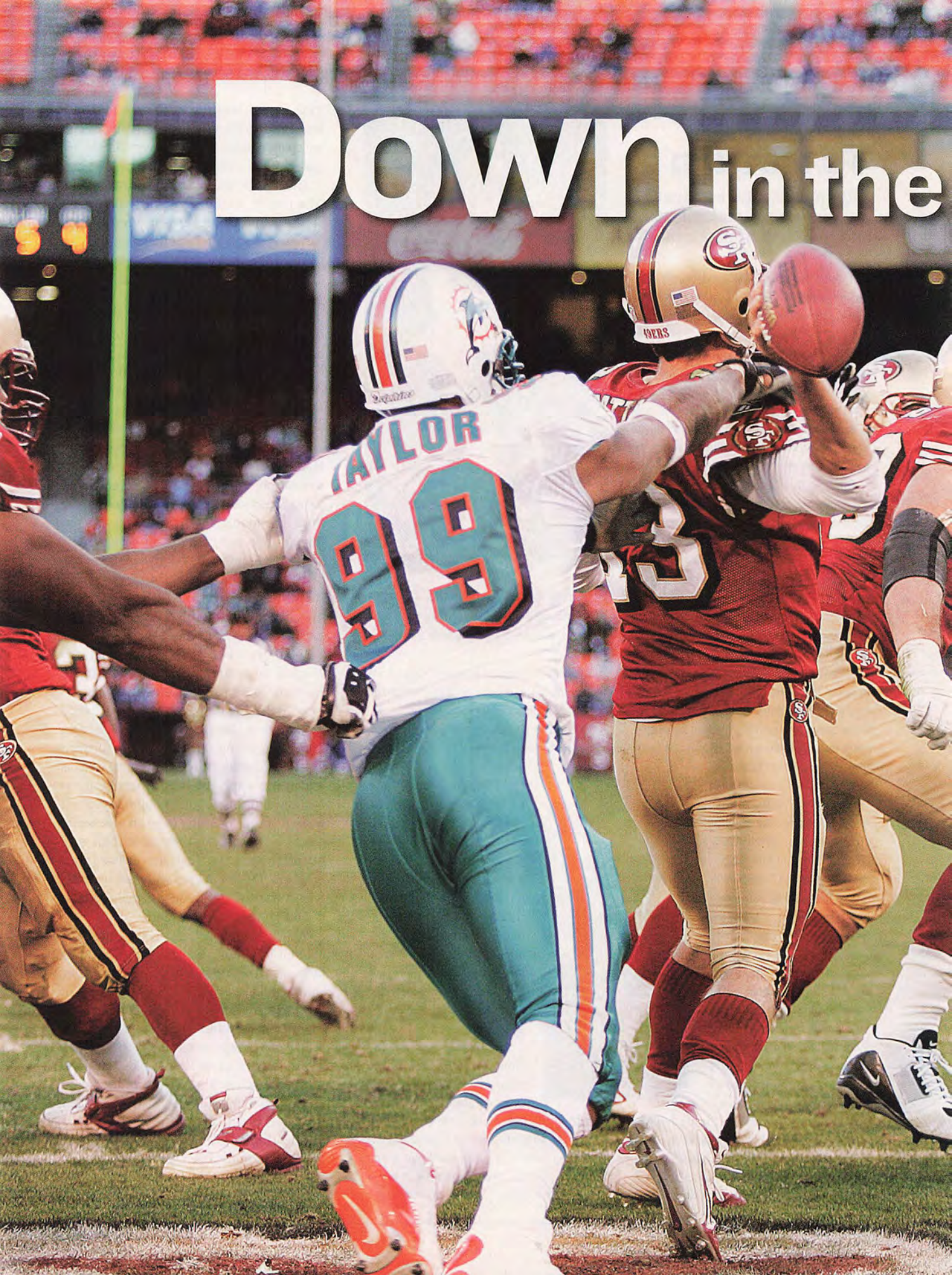
Which brings us back to the question: What is it that drove a man knocked down so many times to get back up again? After thinking for a second, Hill lists a couple of reasons: He felt he could still compete. He had unfinished business. Then he stops, and a grin creeps across his face. "But the main thing is, I just love to play," he says. "I'm sure when I'm retired many years from now, I'll be playing at the YMCA. I just love basketball."

And there you have it, that most refreshing of motivations in today's NBA: a player doing something purely for love.

A great story indeed. □

WILLIAM R. SMITH (TOP); BOB JORDAN/AP

Down in the



Dumps

BLINDSIDED Rattay's fumble on the last of Taylor's three sacks resulted in the game-winning touchdown.

It's been a long fall from the top for the once-mighty **Dolphins** and **49ers**, who met in a game devoid of playoff implications but with plenty of draft-day importance

BY MICHAEL SILVER

Photographs by Robert Beck

THE NFL STAR in the BMW pulled up to a stoplight on Palm Island Road, where an unkempt man with a scraggly beard was holding a cardboard sign that read, HUNGRY, NEED $ FOR FOOD. The athlete, who was on his way to work on a Tuesday morning in October, lowered his tinted window and handed the grateful man a $100 bill. ¶ "Hey!" the man said, "you're Zach Thomas." ¶ "That's right," the Miami Dolphins' All-Pro middle linebacker replied. ¶ "Listen, brother. You hang in there." ¶ The Dolphins were 0–6 at the time—*Brother, can you spare a victory?*—and Thomas drove off wondering if he'd entered a *Seinfeld*-like parallel universe. Miami and the San Francisco 49ers, two of the NFL's winningest franchises since 1970 *(box, page 88)*, have plummeted to the bottom of the league.

Twenty years ago at Stanford Stadium, with quarterbacks Joe Montana and Dan Marino in starring roles, the 49ers defeated the Dolphins in Super Bowl XIX. On Sunday, 30 miles farther north on U.S. 101 at San Francisco's aptly renamed Monster Park, in a meeting of 1–9 teams, Miami prevailed over the Niners 24–17.

"That was despicable," 49ers outside linebacker Jeff Ulbrich said after his team had moved into the crash-test dummy's seat in the NFL standings.

"This was a game I felt we had a chance to win, but, obviously, we didn't," added coach Dennis Erickson. "It was just a matter of who was going to screw it up—us or them. Lo and behold, it was us."

As is the case in Miami, fans spoiled by decades of success in San Francisco have been jolted by their home team's precipitous fall. Owners of a record-tying five Lombardi Trophies, the Niners were the league's winningest team in the 1980s and '90s. As recently as two years ago they won the NFC West—their 14th division title in 22 years. Now cynicism is running rampant in the City by the Bay, where boobirds dot an increasingly empty stadium and parsimonious owner John York is less popular than Karl Rove.

The Dolphins, who narrowly missed the playoffs the past two years, are in the midst of their first losing season since 1988, and only their second since '76. Coach Dave Wannstedt resigned on Nov. 9, two days after Miami's 24–23 home loss to the Arizona Cardinals, extending a run of prema-

ture exits from the club this season. Those include Marino's departure after a three-week stint as team vice president last January and 27-year-old star running back Ricky Williams's sudden retirement a week before training camp started.

"You can say we got dealt a bad hand, but it's more like people thought we had a good hand—and we were just bluffing," Thomas said last Saturday. "I used to get upset every year when we'd lose in the first or second round of the playoffs, but I'd take that any day over what we're going through now. It's embarrassing."

The Dolphins were a grumpy bunch on Sunday, having been living out of suitcases for nine days. The NFL had honored a request from Wannstedt to schedule the

team's two West Coast games in Seattle and San Francisco on back-to-back Sundays so the club would have to make only one cross-country trip. That ticked off many of the players and their families. What's more, a Thanksgiving dinner of crab cakes and steak at a Union Square restaurant was blamed by All-Pro defensive end Jason Taylor for the food poisoning that left him vomiting for two days afterward. On Sunday, Taylor took out his anger on the 49ers' overmatched offensive line and quarterback Tim Rattay, getting three of the Dolphins' eight sacks. The last takedown forced a fumble that linebacker Derrick Pope scooped up and carried one yard for the touchdown that put Miami on top 24–10 with 3:10 remaining.

Unlike the 49ers' impotent offense, which produced only a 19-yard Todd Peterson field goal and a garbage-time touchdown with 37 seconds left, the Dolphins' attack showed some semblance of spunk. Already playing with an extremely sore lower back and buttocks, quarterback A.J. Feeley (17 of 33, 159 yards, two touchdowns) shook off a dislocated middle finger on his passing hand six minutes into the first quarter and looped a 25-yard scoring pass to wideout Chris Chambers for the game's first points. "I don't know how I did that," Feeley said afterward. "I couldn't even feel the ball." After San Francisco had taken a 10–7 lead on middle linebacker Derek Smith's 46-yard fumble return on the second play of the fourth quarter, Feeley coolly zipped a 15-yard touchdown toss to tight end Randy McMichael for the go-ahead score.

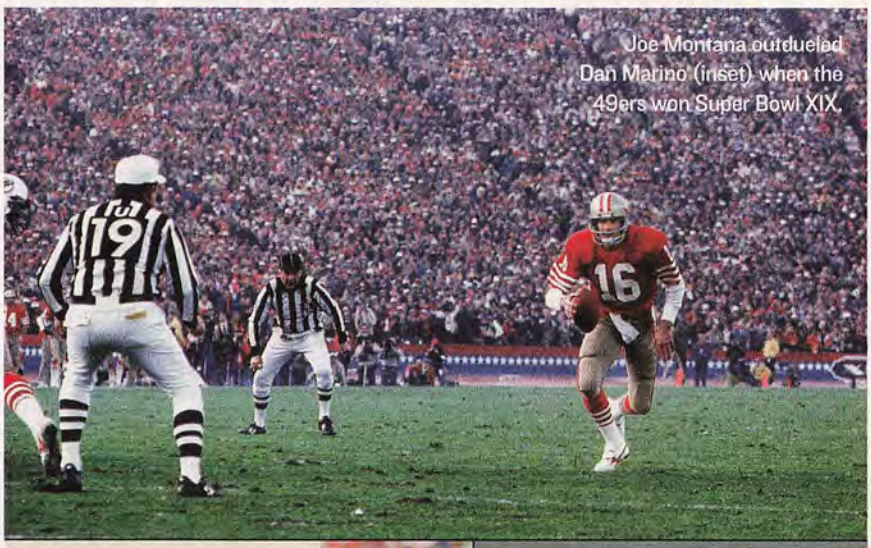
Such idyllic moments give rise to the notion among the Dolphins that they are mere victims of circumstance, that they are only a few tweaks of the roster from returning to the ranks of the contending. It is true that they have endured an unseemly share of bad breaks, from Williams's shocking defection in July to the *four* hurricanes that rattled families and altered practice and game schedules in August and September to the slew of players lost to season-ending injuries (including defensive tackles Tim Bowens and Larry Chester, linebacker Junior Seau and wideout David Boston). "I labeled it the Perfect Storm," Wannstedt said last Saturday from his Naples, Fla., home. "It was so bizarre, and we got hit from so many angles. It's almost as if we never got started."

> "This was a game I felt we had a chance to win, but, obviously, we didn't," said Erickson. "It was a matter of who was going **TO SCREW IT UP**. Lo and behold, it was us."

Nevertheless general manager Rick Spielman says, "There's a bright future that's going to happen here very quickly. People think we are so far away, but we're actually very close to turning this around." Skeptics might regard that as delusional. In a recent interview Williams said he "couldn't have helped [this year's Dolphins]; they've got big problems." Feeley, too, questioned the team's offensive approach, saying, "We need a scheme, an identity. That kind of went out the door when Ricky quit."

With interim coach Jim Bates not likely to be retained after the season, the offense will be one of many issues to be addressed by the next coach. Who will hire him is a mystery as well. Owner Wayne Huizenga, who has declined comment since Wannstedt's resignation, is searching for a successor to retiring team president Eddie Jones. It's possible that a personnel guru will be hired for the job, or to replace Spielman. Or the new coach could be given authority over the roster's makeup.

THE NINERS' chain of command, on the other hand, is clearly defined; it's the people in charge—Denise DeBartolo York, who wrested control of the team from brother Eddie DeBartolo during the 1998 season, and her husband, John—who infuriate many of the fans. They chanted, "Sell the team!" during the closing moments of San



Joe Montana outdueled Dan Marino (inset) when the 49ers won Super Bowl XIX.

HEINZ KLUETMEIER (MONTANA); ANDY HAYT

Winning Traditions

WHEN THIS season began, the Dolphins and the 49ers had the most regular-season victories in the NFL since the 1970 merger. The two teams had made the playoffs a combined 42 times, and in January '85 they squared off in Super Bowl XIX. (The Niners won 38–16.) Even after what has arguably been the low point in the history of each franchise, Miami and San Francisco still rank first and fourth, respectively, in victories. (All figures in the chart are since the merger.)

Team	Playoff seasons	Super Bowls	Record
>DOLPHINS	21	5	336-193-2
STEELERS	20	5	317-212-2
COWBOYS	23	8	314-217-0
>49ERS	21	5	313-215-3
RAIDERS	18	4	312-213-6
VIKINGS	21	3	309-220-2
BRONCOS	15	6	307-218-6
REDSKINS	14	5	298-231-2
RAMS	18	3	290-237-4
EAGLES	14	1	268-256-7

WE'RE THE MOST HIGH TECH COMPANY ON THE PLANET. WE'VE CHECKED.

©2004 Paid for by the U.S. Air Force. All rights reserved.

International space stations, stealth technology and a few projects that technically don't exist — these are just a few of the perks when you're in the United States Air Force. From day one, you'll have a chance to work on the highest applied technology in the world, from communications to aerospace to weaponry. And with us, you'll be able to work your way up. Way up. Call 1-800-423-USAF or log on to AIRFORCE.COM to find out how you can be a part of the world's high tech leader. Which leads us to another perk: We're always hiring.

Gillette YOUNG GUNS

FOR MATT KENSETH, THE SMELL OF VICTORY IS NOT ENOUGH.

He's already one of the best on the track, so to be the best off the track Matt Kenseth uses Gillette Series Storm Force After Shave Splash. He chooses it because it has a provocative, masculine scent that helps him to feel his best.

© 2004 The Gillette Company. All trademarks shown are used with the permission of their respective owners.

Gillette®

The Best a Man Can Get™

Francisco's 37–27 home loss to the Carolina Panthers on Nov. 14, a development that undoubtedly delighted the creators of dumpyork.com, a website that has obtained more than 1,100 signatures demanding that the team be sold.

It is unlikely that ownership will be changing hands anytime soon. John York, who declined comment for this story, has turned down overtures from a group of prospective buyers fronted by former Niners stars Steve Young and Brent Jones. And in October, Oracle CEO Larry Ellison mentioned at a company shareholders' meeting that he had inquired about purchasing the team, only to be told that it wasn't for sale.

PLAYING HURT Despite an injured finger, Feeley threw a pair of touchdown passes as the Dolphins picked up their first road win.

York, who once lectured franchise architect and Hall of Fame coach Bill Walsh on how to run an organization—"I've only written a book on the subject," Walsh complained to friends—has stressed cost-consciousness at every turn. Last winter, team sources say, York decided to end the longtime practice of giving toys to employees' children at the team's Christmas party, earning him the nickname Bad Santa. (He relented, after several executives offered to pay for the toys, though he did institute an age cutoff.)

More objectionable from the fans' perspective has been York's fiscal restraint when it comes to roster moves. General manager Terry Donahue blames the recent gutting of the 49ers' roster on salary-cap woes caused by the DeBartolo–Carmen Policy regime, though it was Donahue who negotiated many of the contracts purged during the off-season. In addition to trading its best player, All-Pro wideout Terrell Owens, San Francisco cut ties with quarterback Jeff Garcia, guard Ron Stone and running back Garrison Hearst (all Pro Bowl players at one time) and two other offensive starters, tackle Derrick Deese and wideout Tai Streets. "I feel bad for Coach Erickson," fullback Fred Beasley said last week. "They stripped this team and gave him nothing to work with."

Each departed starter was replaced by a younger, unproven player, which affected team chemistry on and off the field. "Some of those guys they got rid of were the heart and soul of this locker room," running back Kevan Barlow said. "I don't know if we even have a good locker room guy [on offense]. It was devastating."

Unlike the Dolphins, the Niners harbor no illusions about a quick turnaround. Echoing the skepticism of several players, Beasley said, "We've got so many holes to fill, and with the route we're going right now, it'd be very difficult for me to sit here and say, 'We're going to have a winning season next year.' " What they'll probably wind up with is the first pick in a draft that many believe lacks a true franchise player *(box, right)*.

As for the rest of this year, Barlow said, "we're all playing for our jobs because this season's done." That was obvious as the final seconds ticked down on Sunday. While the Dolphins congratulated one another on their first road victory, the 49ers trudged off as the league's unquestioned laughingstock. Just before ducking into the locker room tunnel, Barlow took off his gloves and tossed them to a middle-aged fan a few rows above the railing. As the running back disappeared into the darkness, the fan chucked the gloves back to the tattered grass below. □

PETER READ MILLER (FEELEY); J. PAT CARTER/AP

Is Help on The Way?

Pickings could be slim at the top of the 2005 draft

THE 49ERS and the Dolphins picked the wrong year to be selecting at the top of the NFL draft. The early book on next April's player pool: very few sure things at the top of the board, but lots of good mid-first-rounders. "This is the year to have the 12th pick, not the second," a college scout for one NFL team said on Monday. It's too early to know which players, such as fourth-year junior quarterback Matt Leinart of USC, might declare early for the draft, but here are the top five prospects who are now eligible, four seniors plus former USC wideout Mike Williams, who unsuccessfully tried to enter the 2004 draft after his sophomore season.

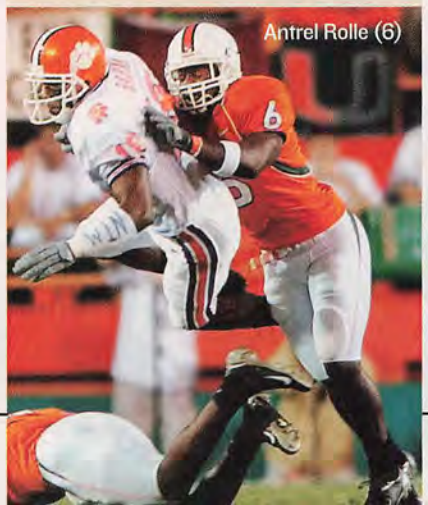
1. ANTREL ROLLE, CB, *Miami*
A player the 49ers, who desperately need a cover corner, should pick; he's a physical tackler too.

2. MIKE WILLIAMS, WR, *USC*
Smooth, athletic and mature, but will the pros downgrade him because he missed a year of football?

3. ERASMUS JAMES, DE, *Wisconsin*
Might develop Michael Strahan–like run-stuffing and pass-rushing skills, which every team needs.

4. CADILLAC WILLIAMS, RB, *Auburn*
Speedster edges teammate Ronnie Brown and Cedric Benson of Texas as the top running back.

5. TRAVIS JOHNSON, DT, *Florida State*
Inconsistent 290-pounder could become an every-down force in the mold of the Vikings' Kevin Williams. —*Peter King*



ALL-AMERICAN SMILE In addition to future riches, Oden is happy about his 3.9 GPA and college opportunities.

Way Ahead of Schedule

NBA scouts, college coaches and shoe reps have been enamored with 7-foot center Greg Oden for two years—and he's still only halfway through high school

BY TIM LAYDEN

Photographs by Robert Beck

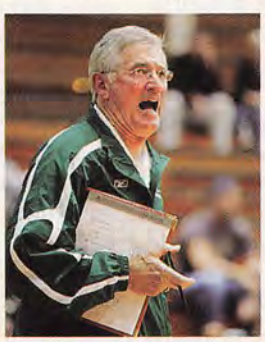
It's January 2003, and a major-college basketball coach is preparing to scout a high school player. A reporter asks the player's name, which the coach can offer only anonymously because NCAA regulations prohibit him from speaking about recruits in the media. "Greg Oden," says the coach. "Six-eleven. Athletic. Smart. Great kid. And you'll love this: He's a freshman."

IN THE nearly two years since, Greg Oden of Lawrence North High in Indianapolis has become the Next One. The next Kobe. The next KG. The next LeBron. The next Dwight Howard. The next precocious teenager being run through the well-oiled star-making machinery that turns potential into a blank check, no college experience necessary. Now a 16-year-old junior, Oden is seven feet tall, weighs 250 pounds and can no longer play video games because his hands are too big for the controller. He can take a step, jump up and touch a spot on the backboard 11 feet, 11 inches off the floor, and when he's running at full speed (which is often), he eats up a court the way an 18-wheeler swallows flat highway. Against type, he is an honor-roll student who is generous with his time and says he wants to go to college before getting rich in the NBA.

Oden is the brightest blip on the radar screens of talent hunters across the basketball spectrum in America, whether they represent the NBA, a college, a shoe company or a television network. "He's fabulous," says one NBA personnel executive. "He's the next great, difference-making big man from the United States. When he ends up in the NBA, whatever team gets him will become a contender."

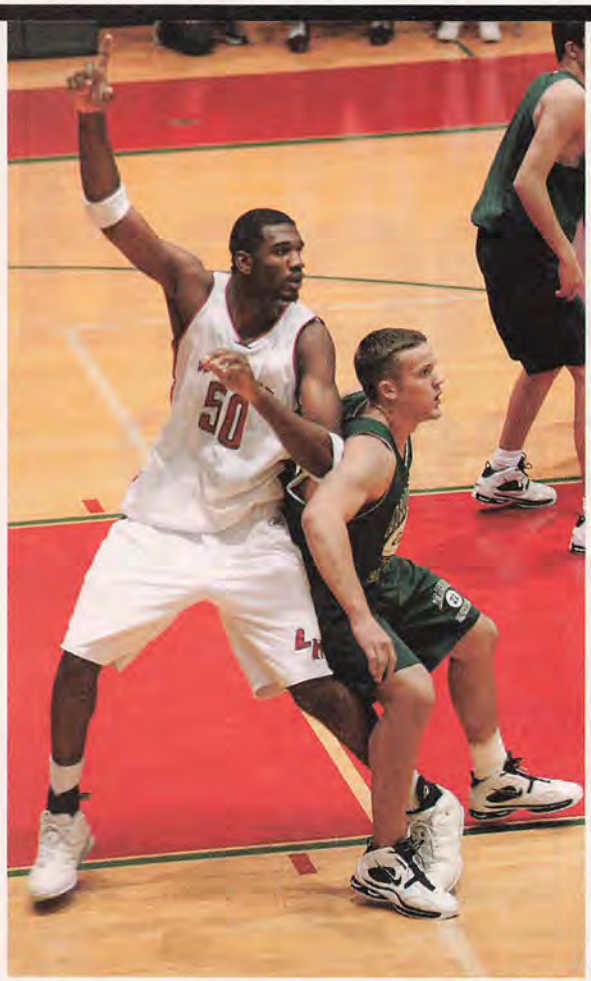
A prominent Division I college coach says, "I couldn't believe how good he was as a freshman. He's just good at too many things. He's got unbelievable quickness for a big guy, he's getting strong—and he's got a brain, which is illegal on top of [everything else]. I'm guessing he'd be the Number 1 player in the draft if he came out this year."

SONNY VACCARO, senior director of grassroots basketball at Reebok (a position similar to those he held first at Nike and then Adidas), whose company sponsors Oden's AAU team, says, "He's so damn good, and there's nothing in his life that even connects to a negative situation. He will get offers. He will have to think about a very nice shoe contract." Rashid Ghazi of Paragon Marketing Group, which is in final negotiations with ESPN to televise Lawrence North's Dec. 9 game against Poplar Bluff (Mo.) High and its North Carolina–bound power forward, Tyler Hansbrough, says, "Greg Oden is, by most accounts, the Number 1 player in the country who is not in the NBA. [He's got] big buzz. Greg Oden and Lawrence North are the national story in high school basketball this year."



OH, SHOOT! Keefer wants Oden, who averaged 14 points last year, to get more touches.

Amid all this hype Oden is also a big brother, who has a car and a little brother—6' 8", 240-pound freshman Anthony—who needs a ride on a rainy autumn evening. So Greg stands behind the couch in



MAN AMONG BOYS Oden's NBA-ready size and the futility of fronting him were evident in a Lawrence North scrimmage on Nov. 17.

his family's modest, two-bedroom apartment a mile from Lawrence North and begs his mother, Zoe, for a reprieve from chauffeur duty. "I don't have time," he says. Mom laughs. Anthony wins. Greg drives. The two boys run through the rain toward a battered minivan. "It ain't no Hummer," says Zoe. "It's just an old van that one of my friends used to drive."

Here is the disconnect. In the basketball world Oden is a future star and millionaire—Bill Walton or Bill Russell in training wheels. "The best big-man prospect in high school or college," says another NBA executive. Yet in his own world Oden is a boy measured by his potential as a grownup. He dates a sophomore, Samantha Shell, a forward on the Lawrence North girls' team. During study periods, he works in the school's athletic department, filing papers, answering phones and running for coffee. And after practice he likes to dash off to Best Buy to see if any new DVDs are on sale. The kid lives for movies. "Renting movies, buying movies, going to the movies, you name it," says Mike Conley Jr., the Lawrence North junior point guard who's also a blue-chip Division I recruit. Once in a while Oden will go to the movies alone and sit in the rear of the theater, his head towering above the back of the seat, enjoying a good flick.

Recently, while meeting with a reporter in the empty field house at Lawrence North, he wore a red headband emblazoned with the NBA logo. But don't read anything into it. The headband belongs to teammate Warren Wallace, and Oden used it to hold his glasses in place during pickup games because he forgot his contact lenses. It's true, he earned a 3.9 GPA for the first marking period, but Oden quickly qualifies that performance. "I'm not taking honors classes," he says. "Chemistry, algebra II, German, American history. But not honors."

The buzz that excites others doesn't stir him. A few weeks ago he went to the mall with his mother. They hadn't been shopping together in a long time, so in the car on the way over Greg said, "Mom, I've got to tell you before we get there: People are going to be staring and talking, and probably some of the them will ask for my autograph." And that's exactly what happened. People stared and talked and asked for Oden's autograph. "I don't mind it," he says, "but I don't deserve it."

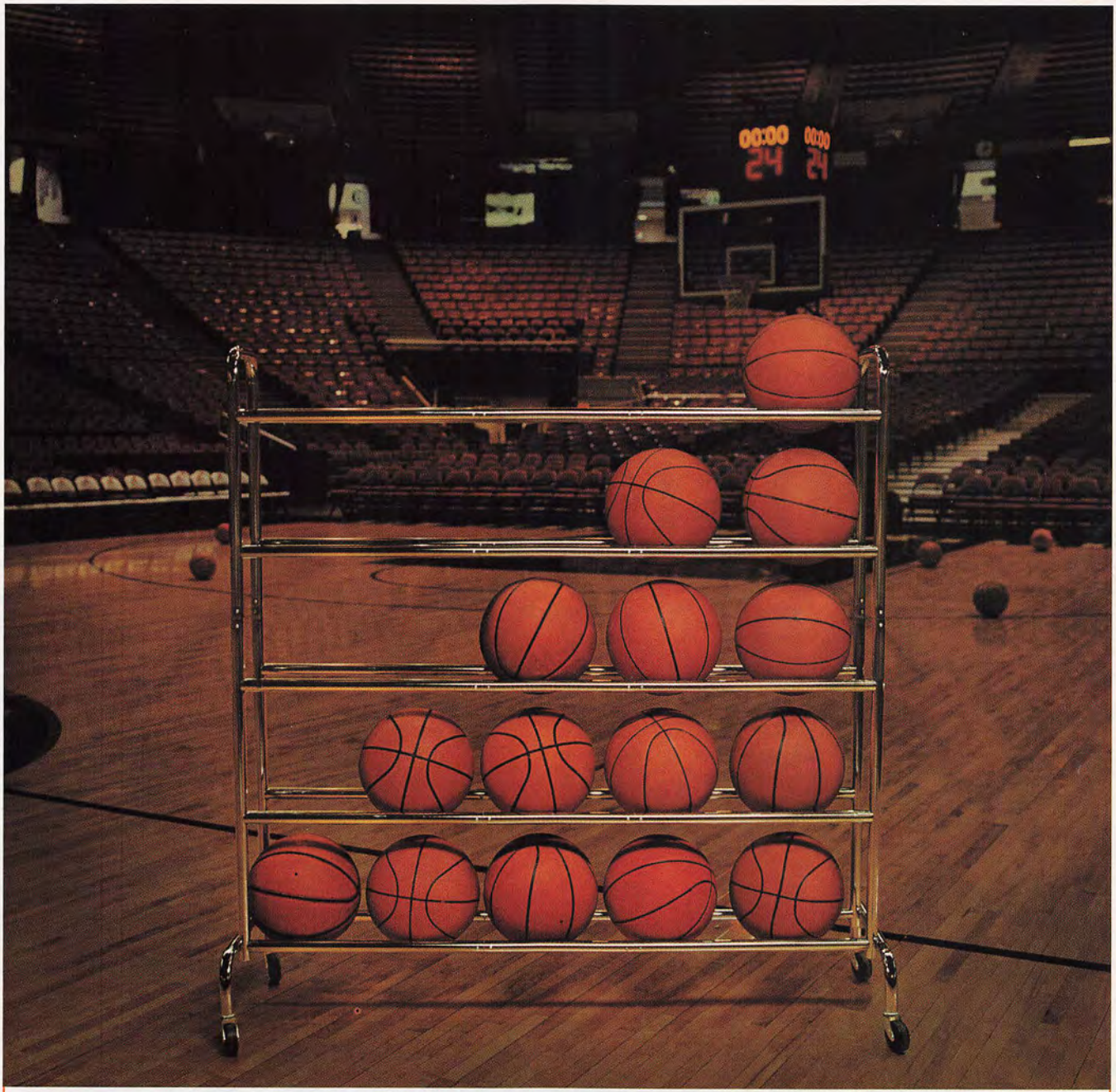
> Oden is "the next **GREAT, DIFFERENCE-MAKING** big man from the United States," says one NBA executive. "Whatever team gets him will become a contender."

ODEN WAS discovered as a fourth-grader, not long after Zoe was divorced from Greg's father, also named Greg, and moved from Buffalo to Terre Haute, Ind. An AAU basketball coach in Terre Haute, Jimmy Smith, was looking for kids to round out a newly formed team, and the dad of one of his players had seen a new kid on the playground at Fuqua Elementary. Smith went to the school's principal and said to her, "There's a young man going to school here, and I don't even know his name, but he's very tall and I'd like to know if he'd be interested in playing basketball on my AAU team." Smith left a business card with the principal, who gave it to Greg, who in turn gave it to Zoe, and a few days later Greg was a member of the fourth-grade Terre Haute Stars, though he had never played basketball.

"At first he'd get the ball and walk with it or stand in the lane forever," says Smith. "But after a year or two, he started to really develop." He picked up rebounding and shot blocking quickly. His offense developed more gradually.

When Oden was in sixth grade, Mike Conley Sr. came calling. Conley, the 1992 Olympic gold medalist in the triple jump and a former high school point guard in Chicago, had taken a job with USA Track and Field in Indianapolis, moving there from Fayetteville, Ark., where he had coached Mike Jr.'s AAU teams to fourth- and fifth-grade national titles. Conley took over as coach of a team then known as the Riverside Oddsbreakers and went to Terre Haute to sign up a tall kid he had heard about. "I spoke to his mom and to Jimmy Smith, and then I met Greg," says Conley. "He was a sixth-grader, about six-four with big ol' feet. I asked him what he wanted to be. He said, 'A dentist.' I thought, Hmmm."

In the fall of 2001 Zoe found a job in Indianapolis, working as a rehabilitation technician at St. Vincent's Hospital. By then an eighth-grader who stood 6' 7", Greg was enrolled at Craig Middle School and joined a school team that included Mike Conley Jr. at point guard. The team went undefeated and played to packed stands of more than 2,000 fans. "I went there to look at Greg," says Jack Keefer, the Lawrence North coach since 1975. "My gosh! They were devastating. My first



More bars in more places.

Cingular and AT&T Wireless have joined forces to bring you the largest digital voice and data network in America. It's called the ALLOVER℠ network. Cingular will continue to build this network, giving you more signal bars in more places and more people to talk to. It's our promise to improve wireless every day. **cingular.com**

cingular
raising the bar

The ALLOVER network covers over 268 million people and is growing all the time. Coverage not available in all areas. ©2004 Cingular Wireless, LLC.

RECLAIM YOUR FEET FROM

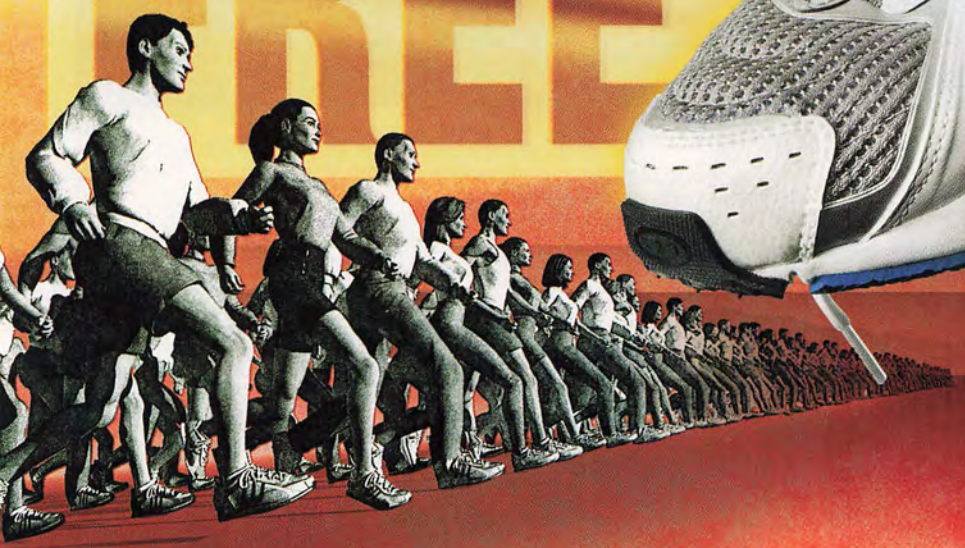
OPPRESSION

PROPULSION, COMFORT

& STABILITY

WILL SET YOU

FREE



APOLLO: AN EXTRAORDINARY SHOE FOR ORDINARY RUNNERS.

EXCLUSIVELY AT:

SPORTS AUTHORITY. OSHMAN'S SUPERSPORTS USA GART sports SPORTMART

adidas

thought was, I don't want them to play the varsity."

A year later Keefer made Oden his starting center and Conley his starting point guard as freshmen, and Lawrence North went 21–3. Last winter, when they were sophomores, Lawrence North won the Indiana large-school state championship; Oden averaged 14 points (taking only nine shots per game from the field) and 10 rebounds, and shot a mind-boggling 71% from the floor while often guarded by three opponents. "I'd like him to shoot more," says Keefer. "This year I think he will."

On the fiercely competitive AAU side, the Riverside Oddsbreakers became Spiece Indy Heat (named for sponsor Tom Spiece, an Indiana sporting goods executive), a veritable Midwestern all-star team that included Oden, Conley, 6' 10" power forward Josh McRoberts of Carmel, Ind., forward Daequan Cook of Dayton and guard Eric Gordon of Indianapolis. They won major tournaments in North Carolina and Las Vegas; Oden was named MVP in both, sending his stock soaring.

Since 1999, 21 high school players have been selected in the first round of the NBA draft, including eight last June. Unless the league adopts a minimum-age rule, expect the best schoolboy players to continue taking guaranteed contracts and shoe deals immediately, rather than risk losing them to an injury or by underperforming in college.

Oden, however, says he may wait. During the summer AAU tour, he made unofficial visits to North Carolina, Wake Forest and Michigan State. He attended Indiana's Midnight Madness. (Hoosiers coach Mike Davis has been at many of the games Oden has played, high school and AAU, since Oden was 14.) In the third week of October, Conley Sr. took his son and Oden to homecoming at Arkansas, his alma mater. They went to a fraternity step show, a concert and a football game, and the boys loved them all. "I have never heard Greg talk about the NBA," says Travis Smith, Oden's longtime bud from Terre Haute. "He talks about college all the time."

Says Oden, "I don't see myself being ready for the NBA in two years. I know people say I am, but I need to work on so much—dribbling, better post moves. I know they say I'm quick, but I need to get quicker. I went to a shooting coach [Purdue legend Rick Mount], and it helped me. When I shoot it right, it goes in, but I need repetition. When I go to the NBA, I want to be ready. That's where college comes in."

TOWER OF POWER Oden has put Lawrence North head and shoulders above its large-school opponents in hoops-happy Indiana.

Says a Division I coach who knows Oden, "If there's one of these kids who will buck the trend, it's Greg."

Of course, there isn't any money on the table yet. "As a 16-year-old making the decision today, Greg's going to college," says Conley Sr. "The question is whether outside entities will make it so attractive that he has to take advantage of it right away."

Outside entities would be shoe companies. LeBron James got a seven-year deal from Nike worth $90 million, more than seven times his Cleveland Cavaliers contract. But, says Vaccaro, "Nobody [will get] close to LeBron money for a long time. You take that deal out of the equation." In that case consider this one: Point guard Sebastian Telfair, out of Brooklyn's Lincoln High, was drafted 13th last June by the Portland Trail Blazers; in addition to his three-year, $5 million NBA contract, he received a six-year, $15 million package from Adidas.

Zoe, 41, will be an important voice in her son's decision. She has raised two sons on a modest income, working tirelessly at a succession of jobs. (Greg has kept in touch with his father, a plumbing and heating contractor, who helps support Greg and Anthony.) "We make bad choices in life," she says. "I got married too soon, had kids too soon. I always told Greg, 'I've worked so many hard jobs, and if I had a college degree, I wouldn't have had to work so hard.'

"The NBA talk, and all that money, it sounds great," says Zoe. "I expect that age limit to come into effect, but if it doesn't, Greg can just take that money and run. Even if his career doesn't work out, he still has the money. But he really wants to experience the things you experience in college. It's a big decision, and it's very scary."

> "I don't see myself as being ready for the NBA in two years," says Oden. "I know people say I am, but I **NEED TO WORK** on so much—dribbling, better post moves."

A predawn fog hung over Lawrence North High when Greg arrived for a workout with teammates before school recently. He practiced post moves with his brother and dribbled two balls back and forth across the court. When he recognized a reporter in the gym, he jogged over to shake hands and addressed him as Mister. Buses began dropping off students outside and a bell rang. Oden darted for the locker room, hurrying to prepare for the school day, rushing to cram his entire youth into a tiny window. □

DRY STATE The LTZ (Less Than Zero) team was locked, loaded and ready for action in the 2004 international amateur open.

Who Thought *This* Was a Good Idea?

On June 27, 1981, Charles Gaines and some friends went into the New Hampshire woods to settle an argument by shooting paint at one another. Look what they came back with

BY CHARLES GAINES

Photographs by Mark Peterson/Redux Pictures

ONE WAY of measuring a life—maybe as good a method as any other—is on the basis of how much peculiarity you have helped to generate. I am not talking about the beetle-browed peculiarity that results in Paxil, prison or pederasty but its merry one-hand-clapping brother who leads us away from the glum quotidian toward cosmic mirth. I'm talking the salsa piquant peculiarity that keeps the whole enterprise of life from tasting like a Swanson chicken potpie—the kind generated by, for example, the first human being to practice ventriloquism with a dog or to try voluntarily to free himself from handcuffs under water . . . or to shoot a ball of paint at another human being and call it a game. ¶ Recently I was introduced to the splendidly peculiar results of my having

TAKE SPLAT! Gaines (left) hadn't fired a paintball since (above, from left) he, Gurnsey and Noel dreamed up the sport.

BOB GURNSEY (GROUP SHOT)

been the first person to do the last thing on that list and was presented with a lifetime achievement award for my effort. No, it wasn't the Pulitzer. But that is a prize given less for peculiarity than for the drudgery of intentional accomplishment and has about it none of the Buddhist irony of the award I received in July at a Sheraton hotel in Mars, Pa., where I could have said in my acceptance speech, but didn't, "The last thing Hayes Noel and I had in mind 23 years ago, when we dreamed up Paintball, was to achieve something."

In fact all we were trying to do was settle an argument that had evolved over the course of a month of evenings drinking rum and tonics and grilling bluefish in the backyard of a rented house on Martha's Vineyard. In that argument Hayes held that the survival instincts he had developed living in the jungle of Upper East Side New York and working as a stock trader could be effectively applied anywhere. I believed otherwise. What all this rhetoric would nightly boil down to after the second or third rum and tonic was Hayes's (who is as intractably competitive as a gamecock) claiming that his finely honed urban survival instincts would outperform those of individuals such as myself not only in the city but anywhere—including the woods, an environment in which I had grown up and with which, he would cheerfully admit, he had little acquaintance.

Something had to be done to teach this puppy respect, and onto such bald necessity does a salsa piquant peculiarity sometimes rain.

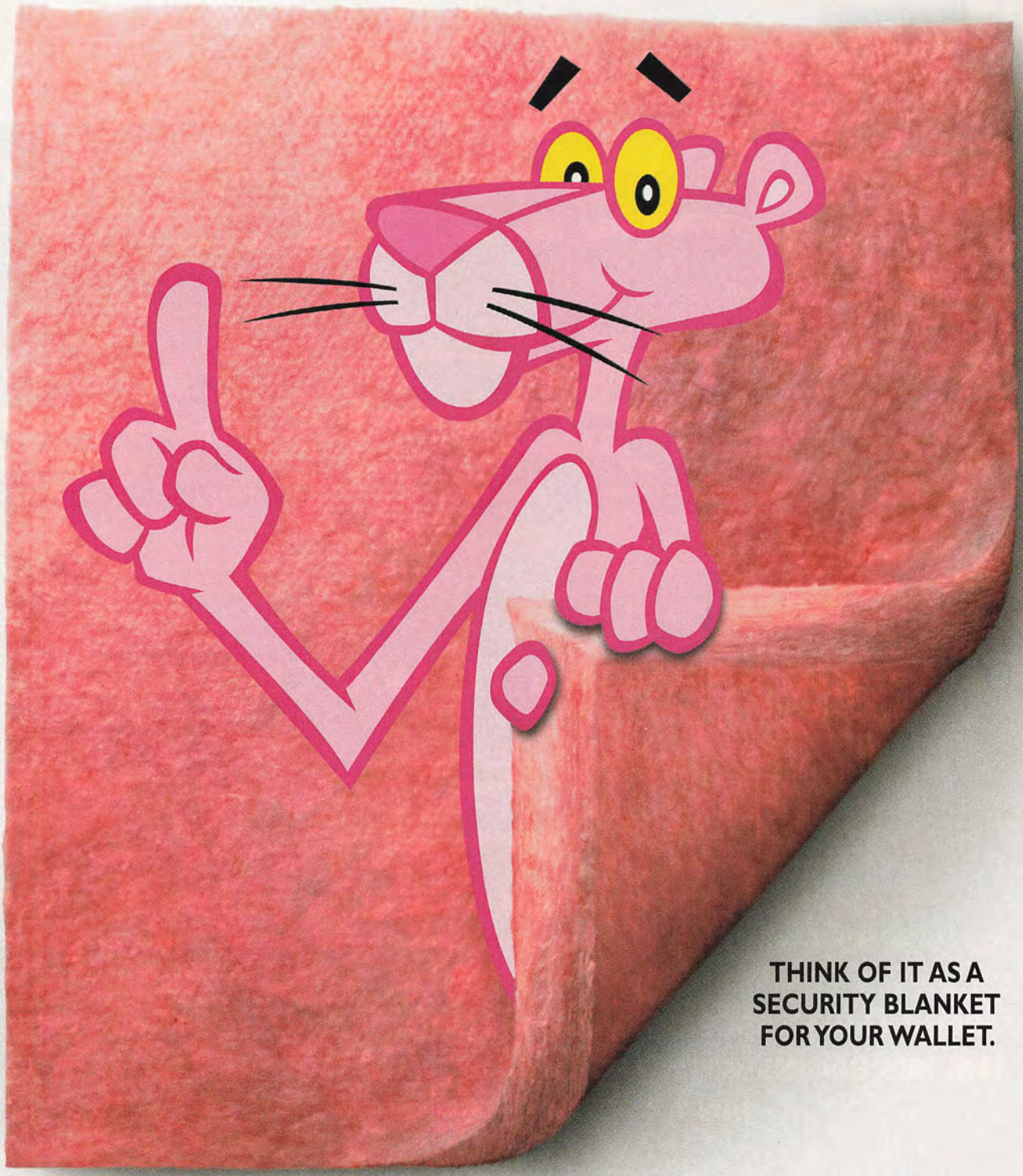
I was living at the time in New Hampshire, a state with no shortage of woods, and when a fellow sheep raiser sent me a catalogue that offered a CO_2-powered pistol used by ranchers and farmers to mark bred animals with balls of paint, milieu and means came together like the cue and eight ball in a perfect side-pocket bank. After testing the pistols in a duel (following which, it is my journalistic duty to report, only Hayes could testify as to how much it hurts to be hit by a paintball), we enlisted our friend Bob Gurnsey, then a New Hampshire ski-shop owner, and devised what in hindsight can only be called a grandly peculiar method of resolving an argument.

Each man played the game as he lived—the bold seeking firefights, the cautious avoiding them, the duplicitous perching in trees.

On June 27, 1981, the three of us, along with nine other argument-resolvers—among them a doctor, a movie producer, an investment banker, an Alabama turkey hunter, a Vietnam vet and a New Hampshire forester—slipped into a hundred acres of woods near my house from different points around its perimeter at a pre-arranged signal. Each of us wore camo and shop goggles, and were equipped with a temperamental Nel-Spot 007 bolt-action paintball pistol, 20 or so balls of paint, extra CO_2 cartridges, a compass and a map of the 100 acres indicating the location of four flag stations and the home base. At each of these flag stations hung 12 flags of a particular color. The point of this game was to be the first man to reach home base with four differently colored flags and without having been marked with paint by another player.

You talk about fun? Even Hayes (who, I'm convinced, spent his time lost and whimpering under a bush until someone—me—mercifully found and shot him) had fun. It was not surprising that each man played the game as he lived; the bold seeking firefights, the cautious sneaking through the woods avoiding them, the duplicitous perching in trees. Even less surprising (to me, anyway; Hayes still believes it was a fluke), the game was won by the forester, who never fired a shot and was never even seen by another player.

End of argument, but the beginning of Paintball. There were three writers other than myself in that first game, including the late Bob Jones, who wrote the first article about it, for this magazine. That article, and ones done later by the other two writers, for TIME and SPORTS AFIELD, described the totally absorbing, often comic adrenaline-overdose experience of playing the game, and suddenly tout le monde wanted to join in. Showered with letters from people asking how they could do that, Hayes, Bob Gurnsey and I responded generously, in the American



*According to the U.S. Department of Energy. THE PINK PANTHER™ & ©1964-2004 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios Inc. All Rights Reserved. The color PINK is a registered trademark of Owens Corning. ©2004 Owens Corning. The GREENGUARD INDOOR AIR QUALITY CERTIFIED mark is a certification mark used under license through the GREENGUARD Environmental Institute.

SAVE UP TO 30% ON ENERGY BILLS.* With the cost of energy on the rise there's never been a better time to improve the insulation in your home. And Owens Corning has the knowledge to help you reduce your energy bills by as much as 30%. As the industry leader, we feature a full-line of products from PINK Fiberglas® to foam sheathing and accessories that can dramatically improve the efficiency of your home. To find out how you can start saving money today, call **1-800-GET-PINK** or visit us at **www.owenscorning.com**. Because when it comes to insulating your home, **It's Smart To Think PINK.™**

GREENGUARD

OWENS CORNING®
INNOVATIONS FOR LIVING™

ACOUSTICS FOAM **INSULATION** ROOFING SIDING

FIVE BIG REASONS TO WATCH THE BCS.

Ford

BUILT FOR THE ROAD AHEAD.

ENTER THE FORD "ROAD AHEAD" CHALLENGE.

YOU COULD WIN A TRIP TO THE BCS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME IN MIAMI AND A CHANCE TO WIN THE NEXT GENERATION OF NEW FORD VEHICLES -- FUELED BY AMOCO ULTIMATE®.

REGISTER AT ABCSPORTS.COM/FORD OR CALL 1 800-468-FORD.

THE BCS BEGINS WITH THE ROSE BOWL GAME PRESENTED BY CITI JAN 1, 4:30 PM ET ON ABC SPORTS.

BOWL CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES abc

bp

A year's supply of Amoco Ultimate® gasoline provided by BP. Always a winner with America's #1 Premium

Log onto abcsports.com/ford for official rules. Vehicles shown are not necessarily the models that will be awarded. BCS, "Bowl Championship Series" and the BCS logo are trademarks of Bowl Alliance Properties, LLC, all rights reserved. No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited. Complete rules available at abcsports.com/ford

PAINTBALL Sports
MAGAZINE
PREMIER ISSUE!
TEXAS CAPTAINS' COUNCIL AND NEW YORK'S WINTER CUP TOURNAMENTS
CALIFORNIA'S IRONMEN TAKE ON THE U.S. MARINES
CANADA'S UNKNOWN REBELS: THE SPORT'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL CHAMPS
"EAT THIS PELLET, SUCKER!" A FIRST-TIME FEMALE VIEW OF PAINTBALL
PLUS:
• TACTICS & STRATEGY
• TECHNICAL TIPS
• NEW PRODUCTS
• EXCITING FIELD ACTION

PAINTING THE TOWN Team Navarone (left) won the first big-money tournament in 1987; "Paintball Sports" debuted in '89.

spirit, by starting a company to help those folks out, in exchange for their money. I wrote some rules for the game, as well as for a sort of Capture the Flag team version devised to seduce more people who needed help, and we put those rules into a shoebox along with a Nel-Spot pistol, some paintballs, a cheap compass and a pair of shop goggles, and sold the kit through the mail for many times what it was worth. We called our company the National Survival Game, and it flourished.

Soon, we were able to move it out of Bob's basement and hire people, and one of the first of those was a fetching young New Hampshire restaurant owner named Debra Dion, who worked as the company's public relations director until 1987, when she moved to Wexford, Pa., to operate, with her husband, Ryan Krischke, one of the first of the Paintball fields franchised for commercial play by NSG.

In the meantime I had sold my stock in the company to Hayes and Bob and gone on, as is my resolute tendency in life, to more work for less money. Over the years I lost all contact with Paintball. Although I knew it had morphed into an industry, developed into a sport as well as a game and become rife with high-tech gear, I didn't once feel moved to play again and never checked out the new hopper-fed, semiautomatic guns that were, I was told, to the 007 what an IBM laptop is to an abacus.

And in fact, I probably would have gone the rest of my life without Paintball had Debra not called last winter to invite me to her 14th annual International Amateur Open Paintball Festival and industry conference in July.

"We want to give you a lifetime achievement award," she said, and I didn't have one, so I said yes. Also, she promised to let me play with one of the hot new guns and shoot people with it.

The event was held in Butler, Pa., over the course of five days, and it surpassed my wildest expectations for peculiarity. It featured the world's largest Paintball trade show—more than 70 vendors selling guns (or "markers" as they are now called), paintballs, helmets, clothing, marker-customizing equipment and a slew of other stuff; day-long team competition on four levels among 1,500 players from all over the world; tech classes; clinics on game strategy and safety; an industry conference with seminars and lectures on subjects such as compressed air safety; a two-day Scenario Game; BMX biking demonstrations; a lot of heavy-metal music; a comely masseuse giving body rubs for a buck a minute; a weird-haircut competition; and a mysterious group of shirtless young men who played some fierce, silent, ritualistic-looking version of dodgeball all day every day.

Buzzed on adrenaline, dressed to kill, the Karnivor rattling inexpertly in my hands, I felt like Abner Doubleday pitching to the Yankees.

The Paintball competitors were mostly teenagers, slender and fleet as young bushbucks, many of them spangled with tattoos, tongue studs and nose rings, who between competitions would wander the fairgrounds dressed in colorful uniforms, with visored helmets cocked back on their heads, practice-tapping the triggers of their markers like two-fingered trumpet players on crystal meth. Triggered in this way by the quickest-fingered, I learned, some of the newest ($1,500 and up), chip-controlled markers are capable of firing more than 20 paintballs a second.

Putting this astounding amount of paint in the air, I further learned, is the name of the game in modern Paintball, which these days is divided into recreational and competitive forms that together make up an $800 million-a-year industry, with more than 10 million players in the U.S. alone and a 13% annual growth rate. The competitive form is regarded as a sport rather than a game and is played on a number of levels, up to a professional one in which players can earn, through endorsements mostly, six figures a year in one of two acronymic and acrimoniously opposing leagues. Most of the teams in these leagues are owned by a few Paintball tycoons, who underwrite them at a loss in order to advertise the markers, paintballs, apparel and magazines they sell. Judging by the ones I met in Pennsylvania, those men tend to be

PAINTBALL SPORTS MAGAZINE; JERRY BRAUN (COVER)

large and positively brimming with delight over their unlikely fortunes. Gino Postorivo, for example, was delivering pizzas in 1989 when he played Paintball for the first time, and is now the blithe 35-year-old owner of National Paintball Supply—which does more than $100 million dollars a year in sales of some 10,000 Paintball-related items—as well as two of the nine Paintball magazines and more than half of the pro teams.

And there was Bud Orr, 60, a California machinist, drag-boat racer and motorcycle builder who in 1985 got tired of all the mechanical problems the old bolt-action guns were having, went out to his shop one Friday evening and in the two hours before *Miami Vice* and two hours after it created the first pump-action Paintball marker. With $1,000 of capital, Bud started Worr Game Products, which he had sold—shortly before I met him—to the ski giant K2 for $10 million.

Understandably in fine spirits, and a naturally generous and sympathetic man, Bud took me under his wing when I expressed an interest in playing a little competitive Paintball. As it happened, I needed generosity and sympathy. After Bud had outfitted me with a yellow-and-black jersey, baggy black pants, shoes, helmet and gloves, and showed me how to work the unspeakably slick Karnivor marker made by his company, I felt like one of the many fly-rod anglers I see who are carrying and wearing $3,000 worth of gear but can't cast.

The field of play Bud led me to, the smallest of nine at the event, was about 100 by 120 feet, surrounded by a 20-foot-tall screen of black mesh (to protect spectators) attached to telephone poles, with a dozen or so inflatable bunkers of various sizes and shapes, behind which players take cover and shoot copiously at one another. Luckily for me, it was charity play at this field—three-man teams of professionals going against anyone foolish enough to take them on, with the entry fees going to the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. This format dispensed with the usual niceties of capturing a flag in favor of two teams simply blasting away until all three members of one were eliminated.

Which didn't take long; the games I watched were one- to three-minute blurs of athletic diving and sliding behind bunkers, with paintballs swarming the air like maddened bees. Since I was not much anymore at diving and sliding, and had gotten no faster in 10 minutes of practice than two or three trigger pulls per second, the format didn't seem tailor-made for me, and my two pro teammates somehow intuited that. As we walked to our end of the field to begin my first game, one of them asked if I thought I could make it to the closest bunker and maybe just stay there. Since the bunker was only 40 feet away and was tall enough to stand behind, that seemed to me a capital idea.

And it was. From behind that bunker—while my teammates slid and dived on my flanks, charitably drawing fire—I was able to pick off a few enemy players in the four games I played. Moreover, as paintballs pounded against my bunker like hundreds of fierce little fists, I was allowed a little time to ponder the bizarre exhilaration of my circumstance. Buzzed on adrenaline, dressed to kill, the Karnivor rattling inexpertly in my hands, I felt, I decided, like Abner Doubleday pitching to the Yan-

Feel the Paint

Its origins lie in kids' games, but there's nothing immature about the booming Paintball industry

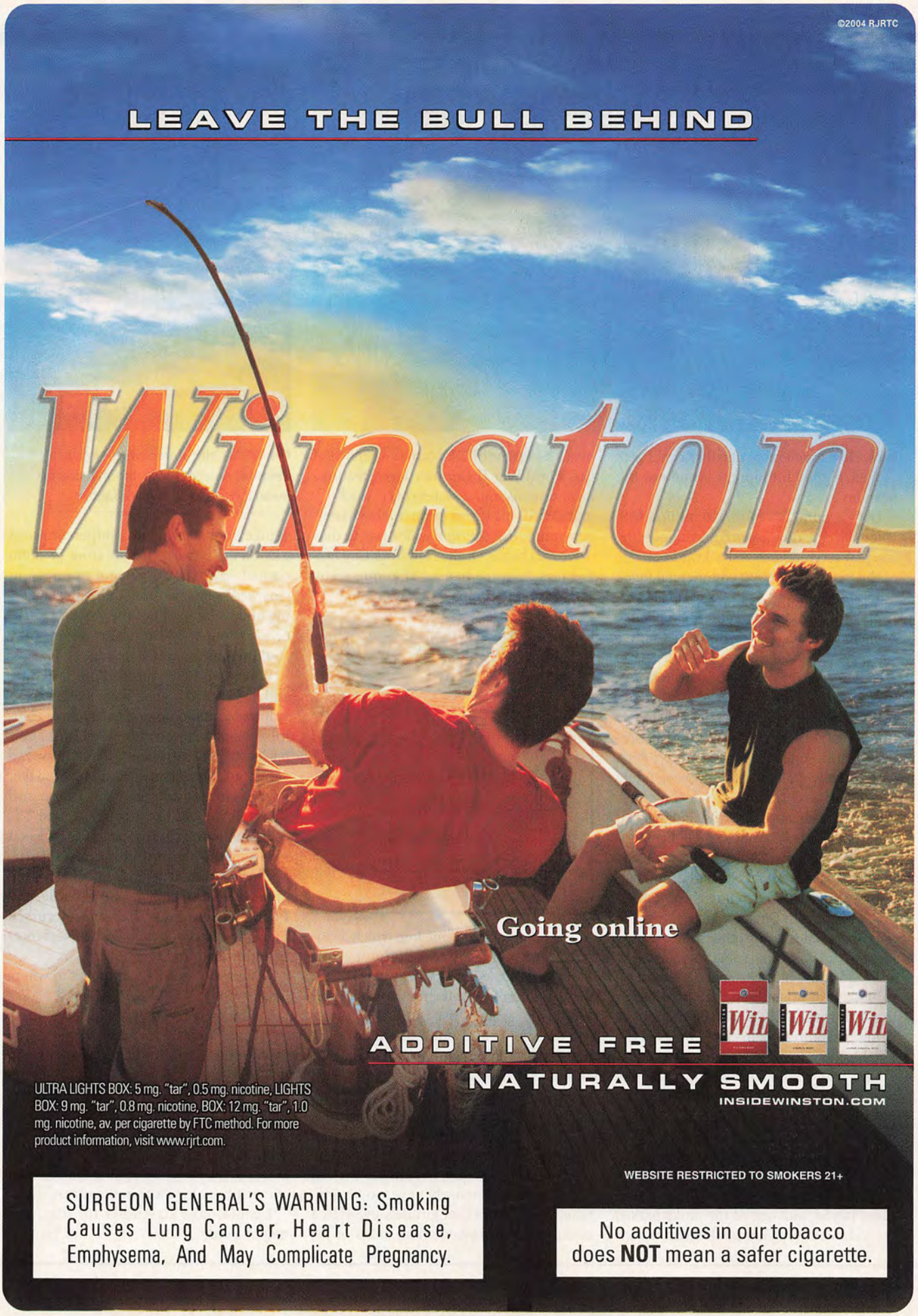
FOR ITS FIRST 15 years, Paintball was almost exclusively a form of adult entertainment, and it had many parallels to the porn industry—the only way to purchase equipment was through the mail or at small specialty stores. You also had to be 18 to play, because commercial Paintball fields could not get liability insurance unless they enforced a minimum-age requirement. In 1995, however, Daisy Manufacturing acquired Paintball equipment manufacturer Brass Eagle and began marketing its products at large retail outlets—including Wal-Mart—where Daisy's BB Guns had sold for years. Around the same time, Paintball's largest insurance provider lowered its minimum age requirement to 10 because of the sport's excellent safety record. "Those two things catapulted our sport," says Debra Dion Krischke, one of the organizers of the world's largest Paintball festival, the international amateur open. "Paintball exploded." Participation has risen from just under six million players in 1998 to almost 10 million in '03, and almost 90% of the players today are between the ages of 12 and 24. Sales of equipment have also risen sharply, from $170 million in 1999 to $390 million last year. Today, almost anywhere in America, fathers and sons (79% of the players in this country are male) can walk into their local Wal-Mart and buy a starter kit for as little as $120. They can then drive to the local Paintball field and, for about $50, play until the sun goes down. "The numbers for sales and participation have gone up each year," says Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association spokesman Mike May. "Every sport reaches a point where it begins to plateau, but [so far] Paintball just keeps getting bigger and bigger."

YOUNG GUNS Paintball went from niche sport to big-time when it cracked the youth market.

Paintball has also become popular as organized competition. A recent event in San Diego attracted 175 seven-member teams and around 20,000 spectators, and Krischke's open annually hosts 1,500 competitors. Those numbers are even more impressive since Paintball competitions have yet to receive significant television exposure, the holy grail the industry is seeking in order to make the sport even bigger. But while it seems unlikely that Paintball will ever bounce the NFL from Fox, the quirky sport, with its high-tech updating of some of the classic games of children, has become part of our culture. "Tag and capture the flag and hide and seek are the oldest games in history," says Krischke. "Everyone thought this would be a fad, but because of its enduring qualities, we knew Paintball was here to stay."

—Mark Beech

©2004 RJRTC


LEAVE THE BULL BEHIND
Winston
Going online
ADDITIVE FREE
NATURALLY SMOOTH
INSIDEWINSTON.COM
ULTRA LIGHTS BOX: 5 mg. "tar", 0.5 mg. nicotine, LIGHTS BOX: 9 mg. "tar", 0.8 mg. nicotine, BOX: 12 mg. "tar", 1.0 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette by FTC method. For more product information, visit www.rjrt.com.
WEBSITE RESTRICTED TO SMOKERS 21+
SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.
No additives in our tobacco does **NOT** mean a safer cigarette.

OH, WELT! The protective gear makes Paintball relatively safe, but that doesn't mean it won't leave a mark (above).

kees. How much more peculiar can it get?

Well, a good bit more, I found out the next day.

Only around 6% of the 10 million U.S. Paintballers participate in competitions; the rest play recreationally in backyards, on one of the more than 3,000 commercial fields around the country or in Scenario Games. If playing competitive Paintball feels like being in a live shoot-everything-that-moves video game—and it does—playing Scenario is like stepping into a low-budget war movie. Every June in Wyandotte, Okla., for instance, more than 3,000 players gather in campers to reenact D Day in the mother of all Scenario Games, one that goes on for two days, assigns individual roles to 1,600 defending "Germans" and 1,600 "Allies," who attack across a river in landing crafts, and that features tanks, smoke bombs and helicopters. There are Scenario Games that lay siege to medieval castles, attack VC-harboring Vietnamese villages, free maidens from dragons, take part in Custer's Last Stand and play out practically any other bellicose plotline you can image and some you can't: such as breaking the Blues Brothers, Jake and Elwood, out of prison and then fighting for the Army of the Blues to keep them from being recaptured by the evil Forces of the Establishment, or FOEs.

Like many of those at the International Amateur Open, T.J. and his wife, Dawn, are possessed by Paintball. Dawn is the editor of *Paintball Sports* magazine, and T.J., when he is not commanding one of his two tanks in a Scenario game, operates a website for Paintball tank information. They live on Long Island, and one of the tanks parked behind their home has made them notorious. The larger of T.J.'s tanks, a replica of the World War II German Tiger, features an enormous sound system over which T.J. and Dawn, his turret gunner, play Metallica or the *1812 Overture* wide open as they drive into battle. Or the New York City firefighters' bagpipe band. "That one really pumps up the troops," T.J. says.

Paintball is like being in a live shoot-everything-that-moves video game; playing Scenario is like stepping into a low-budget war movie.

The other tank, the one into which he invited Debra and me to help hunt down FOEs, is modeled on a World War II German Panther. T.J. cut the roof and doors off a 1990 four-wheel-drive S10 Blazer, built a roll cage for it and put a fiberglass shell around that. He cut gun ports into the side and put a swiveling turret on it and a PVC potato-gun cannon capable of shooting Nerf footballs that "disable" any tank they strike.

T.J. says he's "obsessed with turrets," and when Dawn gave up her place to let me give it a go in one, I could see why. In fact, I wanted intensely never to be anywhere else. From that giraffe's-eye view I could see skirmishes on all sides of us, smoke bombs going off, snipers dressed like bushes, two generals (one of them named Barbie) in negotiation, and "marked" players from both teams laughing and walking out of the woods together to sit out for 15 minutes before they could rejoin the war.

When two FOEs jumped out of hiding and fled, I cut down on them feeling as invulnerable and omnipotent as one of Hannibal's soldiers on his elephant. Their backs striped with paint, the men waved at our tank and grinned, and I realized that I was grinning too, as were Debra and Dawn, firing out of ports below, and T.J., as he maneuvered us through the trees. I felt seized by grinning because of this glimpse of the other side of the looking glass, the cosmic mirth side of battle, and I couldn't stop even after some accursed FOEs disabled our tank with a Nerf football mortar round.

"I told you," said T.J. "You get to where you live for this s---."

"What do we do now?" I asked him.

"We're blown up for an hour, and it'll be the dinner break by then. I guess we're done."

My old pal Debra has never taken anything she didn't like lying down. "The hell we are," she said. "Charles is one of the inventors. Get this thing rolling!" She looked at me, both of us grinning like hyenas. "And you, get back up there in the turret."

I could have kissed her for that, and maybe I did. □

PlayStation.2

LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.™

(Actual Size)

Introducing the new, slimmer, online-ready* PlayStation.2.

www.us.playstation.com

*Requires online connection and Memory Card (8MB) (for PlayStation 2) (each sold separately). Stand sold separately. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. "Live In Your World. Play In Ours." is a registered trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc.

86 Years in the Making

Own a Sports Illustrated Presents Special Collector's Edition celebrating the Boston Red Sox's 2004 championship season.

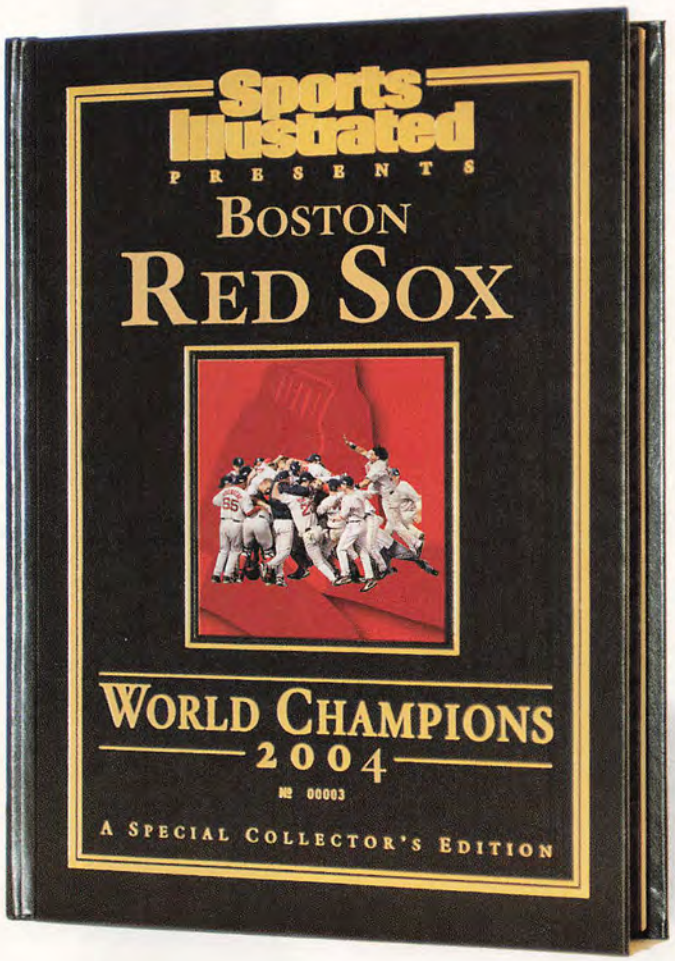
Each Collector's Edition features player profiles, stories from the season and inside coverage of the playoffs and 2004 World Series that only SI can deliver.

Hardcover Commemorative Edition

Individually Numbered

Gold-Lettered Cover Design

Makes a Great Gift!



Only $19.95 plus $4.95 shipping & handling

ORDER NOW Call 1-800-932-1111 or visit www.SIspecialoffer.com

Please allow 4-8 weeks for delivery. Residents of CA, DC, FL, GA, IL, MA, MI, NJ, NY, TN and TX must add appropriate taxes. Cover art and design subject to change. ©2004 Time Inc. All Rights Reserved. SPORTS ILLUSTRATED is a registered trademark of Time Inc. Source code: WS04PA01

THIS IS MY WORLD

10 DVDs
Over 35 HOURS of extras
100 new FEATURETTES

THE ULTIMATE MATRIX COLLECTION

BUY IT ON 12.07.04

ALSO AVAILABLE
LIMITED EDITION COLLECTOR'S SET

The Matrix, *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions*

R RESTRICTED
Sci-Fi Violence, Language and Some Sexuality.

Final Flight Of The Osiris

PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED
Sci-Fi Violence, Sensuality and Language.

thematrix.com

All Other Episodes and Special Features NOT RATED.

VILLAGE ROADSHOW PICTURES

©2004 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
All rights reserved.

What To Say When A Kid Wants To Quit

BY RICK WOLFF

Mom, Dad ... I want to quit. It just isn't fun anymore." Many parents have heard that from their young athlete, but how do you react when your child says he or she has had enough? The initial reaction might be to go into a "winners never quit, quitters never win" rant. While you want to send the message that quitting is almost never the answer, it's a difficult situation for everyone involved, one that often deserves a more thought-out response.

Quitting a sport is rarely a spontaneous decision, especially as an athlete gets older. Depending on the child, there can be a variety of reasons for his or her decision, and how you react depends on the nature of those reasons as well as your child's age.

If your seven-year-old tells you, after playing soccer for just a few weeks, that he doesn't like it and would like to try football instead, that's fine. Yes, this is technically quitting the soccer team, but at that young age, it's perfectly understandable for a child to want to sample a variety of sports. In fact, when children are younger than age 10, hopscotching from one sport to another is commonplace. You should at least mention to your child that quitting a team is not recommended, but in these early years, kids need to experiment with different activities.

When a 10-, 11- or 12-year-old says she wants to quit a team or a sport, however, you should remind her—in a reasonable, non-judgmental tone—that she did make a commitment before the season began, and that quitting is not something to be taken lightly. By this age, if the child really wants to leave a squad, she should be able to at least articulate the precise reason or reasons why. Simply saying "I'm not having any fun" needs a little more explanation.

Some deeper, less obvious reason probably caused the child to say she's had enough. It might be something surprising, such as teasing from a teammate in practice, or perhaps the youngster senses that the coach doesn't like her. Whatever it is, it's up to you to sit down with your child and encourage her to open up about the decision.

During your talk, it's good to reinforce the concept of commitment. Good old-fashioned principles like determination and drive will always be the kinds of positive life lessons you want your children to take away from playing sports. So remind them of their commitment to the team, to the coach, and, most important, to themselves. They'll probably feel a lot of guilt over giving it up, and they'll likely develop a sense of accomplishment if they stick it out.

By the time your athlete is in high school, there are very few acceptable reasons to quit. Always remind your sons and daughters at the start of a season that when they go out for a high school team, they are making a serious commitment. At that level, it usually means practice every day, five days a week. The team and coaching staff are now relying on them to be there all the time, for the whole season.

I realize that the star player rarely quits the team. It's usually the kid on the bench who works hard in practice but ends up with limited playing time. He often doesn't get much more than the intrinsic rewards of being part of the team, and for him, it can be difficult to keep his spirits high throughout a long season.

But at some point, the desire to quit a high school team must be outweighed by the importance of accountability. If your child understood at the start of the season that she had to stick with it no matter what, she must be reminded of that when it gets tough. Not everything in life is meant to be easy, and backing out is a lose-lose for her and the team.

Rick Wolff is chairman of the Center for Sports Parenting (www.sportsparenting.org). His weekly radio show, The Sports Edge, *is heard every Sunday morning on WFAN Sports Radio 660 AM in New York.*

ILLUSTRATION BY MARC ROSENTHAL

© 2004 Time Inc.

HEAVY ARTILLERY FOR THE WEEKEND WARRIOR.

DODGE DURANGO ADVENTURER. Big size. Smooth ride. HEMI® power. Starting at $32,090.* With aggressive exterior features like tubular side steps and Mineral Gray Metallic fascias and bodyside moldings, it's easy to see Durango Adventurer is made for the front lines of fun. Under those bold looks, you'll find the versatility of a rear cargo organizer, removable storage bin liner, and more. Plus, your choice of one of six different Thule® roof-mounted carriers or a Dodge Adventurer Kit. It's everything you need to declare the weekend a victory. Visit us at dodge.com or call 800-4ADODGE.

*MSRP excludes tax. As shown, $35,925. For more information about Chrysler Financial, ask your local dealer. Properly secure all cargo.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ FIVE-STAR | HIGHEST GOVERNMENT FRONTAL CRASH TEST RATING

Chrysler Financial

BUCKLE UP

New technology from Bose. Tailored to you and your room.

First it listens.

Then it learns.

Then it adapts.

Introducing the **New Lifestyle® 48** DVD home entertainment system.

It adapts to the acoustics of your room.

Only from Bose. Apart from the quality of your speakers, the greatest impact on the sound you hear is where you put them, and the room itself. With poor room acoustics or less than ideal speaker placement, even a great system can sound like one worth half the price. The Bose® ADAPTiQ® audio calibration system listens to your room, learns where your speakers are, then adapts the sound to overcome most of the acoustical challenges. You no longer need a perfect listening environment for your system to reach its full potential.

ADAPTiQ® Audio Calibration System

It knows what kind of music you like.

uMusic™ Intelligent Playback System

Only from Bose. Our newest advancement is another industry first, the uMusic™ intelligent playback system. First, it lets you store the songs from your entire music collection, up to 350 CDs, right in your Lifestyle® system. But the real breakthrough comes in its unique ability to listen to the music you play and learn your preferences based on your likes, dislikes, or even your mood at the moment. It can then select and play the music you enjoy. Automatically. No menus. No need to create playlists. No computer required.

The Lifestyle® 48 system also includes Bose® link. It allows you to connect other compatible Bose products anywhere in the house. Play different sources in different rooms at the same time, or have instant access to your entire music collection from any room of your home.

Hear the new Lifestyle® 48 DVD home entertainment system. Advanced technology on the inside. Simplicity and elegance outside. With performance we invite you to compare to that of the largest, most expensive systems you can find. Then you'll discover why Bose is the most respected name in sound.

To order directly, or for Bose stores and dealers near you,
call 1-800-ASK-BOSE, Ext. P74
Learn more at ask.bose.com/wp74

BOSE®
Better sound through research®

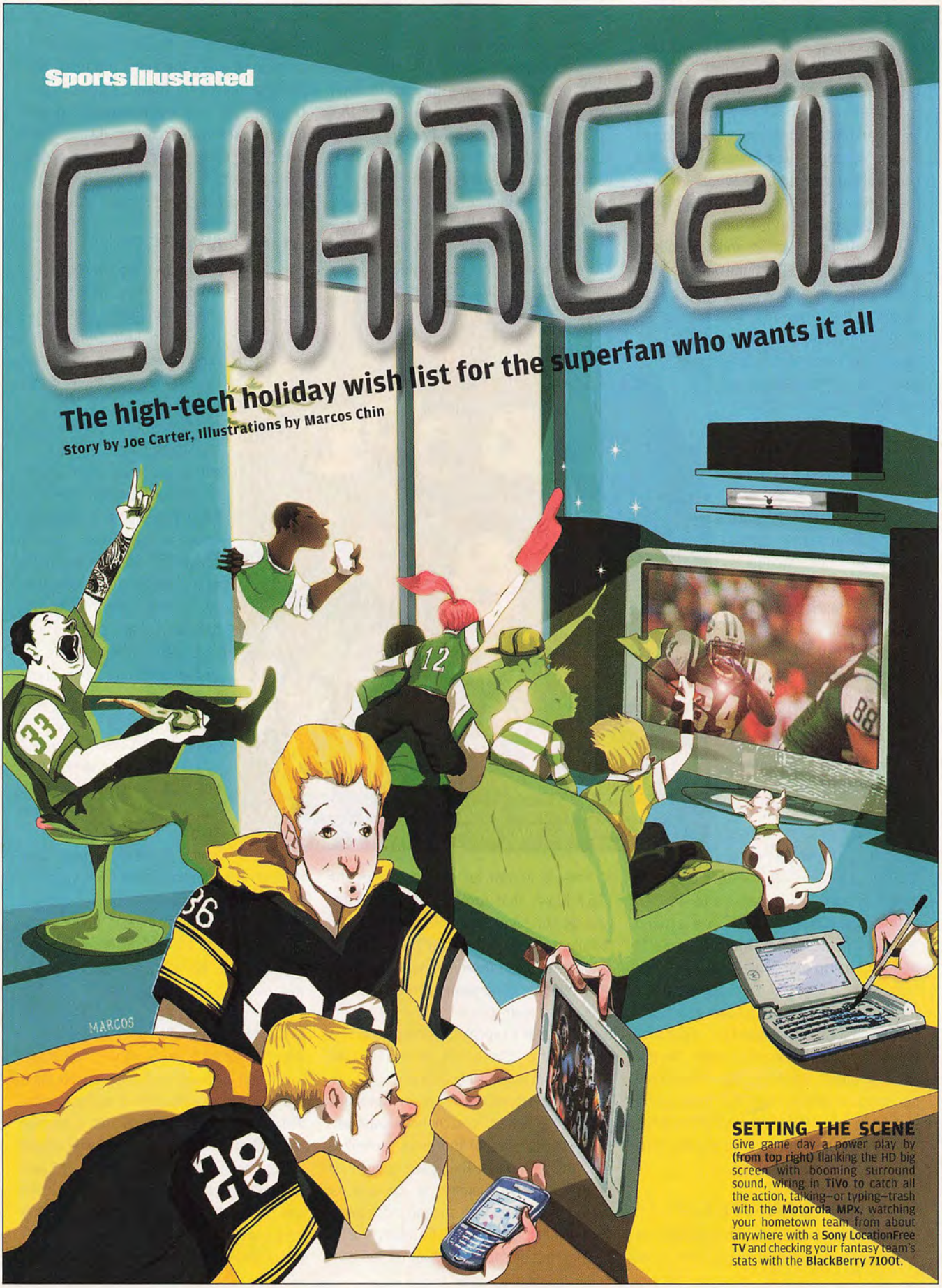
©2004 Bose Corporation. Patent rights issued and/or pending. The Lifestyle® media center design is also a registered trademark of Bose Corporation. CCM-000479

Sports Illustrated

CHARGED

The high-tech holiday wish list for the superfan who wants it all

Story by Joe Carter, Illustrations by Marcos Chin



SETTING THE SCENE
Give game day a power play by (from top right) flanking the HD big screen with booming surround sound, wiring in **TiVo** to catch all the action, talking—or typing—trash with the **Motorola MPx**, watching your hometown team from about anywhere with a **Sony LocationFree TV** and checking your fantasy team's stats with the **BlackBerry 7100t**.

In this the season of heavy giving and, of course, getting, fans with a sweet tooth for technology have many reasons to rejoice. There are more ways than ever to watch and listen to games, stay on top of scores, schedules and fantasy stats, and chat it all up with our boys. Whether you're feeding your own fanaticism or someone else's, it's a gear paradise out there.

Gear, after all, is good, and as a college chum once told me (Arthur, I've never forgotten this), one must always upgrade the program. So here's the skinny on what's new, nifty and nice, stuff that dazzles the eye and ear and keeps you in the game.

BIG PICTURE

Wonderfully wide high-definition television is the best thing to happen to TV since slow motion. Terrell Owens (when he's not catching a naked actress) cutting for a big gainer. Maria Sharapova covering the court with those endless legs. All in crisp detail and pure color.

HDTV is sexy. Pricey too, right? Not necessarily. Smaller LCD and plasma flat-screen beauties from Philips, Sony and other HD manufacturers won't always tap you out. If size matters, Sony's 61-inch XBR Wega is a $15,000 to $20,000 masterpiece. The newly upsized 45- (Sharp) and 46-inch (Samsung) LCD flat panels are around $6,000. Too steep for spousal sign-off? Head for the HD rear-projection aisle. Units from Sony (LCD) and Samsung (DLP for Digital Light Processing) have great pictures, and a 60-incher goes for about four grand, 50 inches for less than three. They're 14 to 20 inches deep—not flat-screen slim, but much trimmer than the tube you're staring at now. If you're not glued to a flat panel, you can spend less and put the "savings" toward excellent audio.

SOUND STRATEGY

You may have heard the term audiophile; it is to audio systems what gourmet is to food and connoisseur is to life's finer pursuits. In other words, you don't want to be one. Too fussy. But you do want to enjoy every nuanced decibel of the sound that CDs, DVDs and HD digital TV deliver. When Ray Lewis lays the lumber on a halfback, you want to hear every crunch and crack. It takes top equipment, of which there is much, and for which you can spend the moon. My holiday wish is for you to get—or give—good without anyone going broke.

PAQED HOUSE Who needs to buy a game program when the HP iPAQ can whisk you to stats downloaded from the Web?

Rotel is known for that. It makes the black boxes that turn signal into sound, and its surround-sound receivers are an excellent all-in-one unit for home theater setups. For separate components, pair one of Rotel's surround-sound processors with one of its multichannel power amplifiers (for 5.1, 6.1 or 7.1 speaker/woofer systems).

No matter the brand, Rotel VP Mike Bartlett says maximizing amp power is a priority for systems driving many speakers. Eighty to 100 watts per channel is a must. "The physical size of the power supply is everything," he says. The power rating must be driven for all channels all the time, or "you could end up with an amp that's just a four-cylinder when you really need a V-8."

Speaking of speakers—another monster category with soaring price potential—a few companies with high-end products also develop models for lower slopes of audio Olympus. For instance, the respected B&W lines are acknowledged for advancing the sonic arts in everything from the box to speaker cones. B&W's in-wall and free-standing speakers simply won't disappoint.

ROAD GAMES

Traveling can turn the game you're dying to watch into mere *SportsCenter* highlights, but thanks to a smart little chunk of TV technology, you no longer have to miss out. Sony offers us LocationFree TV. You're in London, and the Steelers are on *Monday Night Football*. If you bring along your seven- or 12-inch LocationFree LCD TV tablet, and have a wired or wireless high-speed Internet connection, you can watch the game. You're essentially tuning in from home thanks to a base unit that's plugged into your cable/satellite/antenna system and into your home high-speed modem. And get this: If you can't watch the game live because it's on at 2 a.m. London time—and you're not *that* rabid—no problem. You go online and tell your TiVo to record the contest, which it then can play back through LocationFree after you wake up. Given the limits of even the broadest of the broadbands, you won't get a home-grade picture, but you will get the game and the sound of the game, whenever you want, wherever you are. Cool or what?

LONG SHOTS

When we actually go to games, few of us, sadly, can ante up for dugout or courtside seats, so we take pictures of distant, semi-discernible moments. Wouldn't it be nice to get closeups of Barry hangin' with Willie?

You *can*, like SI photogs, with gear close to theirs in performance but not in cost. The Canon EOS 20D, for example, is an 8.2-megapixel "prosumer"-quality SLR that will seriously upgrade your picture-taking

PHILIPS

Experience television in a whole new light.

Turn on the new flat TV from Philips with Ambient Light Technology, and watch what happens. Your eyes see more than what's on the screen, as color and light expand beyond the frame and onto the walls. You bask in the warm glow of the background lighting that automatically changes color and intensity to reduce eye strain and provide a more relaxed viewing environment. And with Pixel Plus™ 2, you experience the detail and vivid colors that are as close to real life as you can get. For a deeper view of the entire Philips Flat TV™ line, featuring Ambient Light Technology, and to find the retailer nearest you, check out www.flattv.philips.com. It's unlike anything you've ever seen before.

PIXEL PLUS 2

ambi light

Experience Ambient Light televisions in LCD or Plasma.
LCD: 32"-42" Plasma: 42", 50"

© 2004 Philips Electronics North America Corporation

program. "The autofocus and automatic exposure systems work really fast," says Rudy Winston, a manager in Canon USA's technical marketing department. "That helps you stay on top of the action." So does the single-lens reflex format that shows you the exact picture you're about to take. And when you do push the button, there's none of the annoying delay common with the point-and-shoot class.

Another SLR bennie is interchangeability among 55 normal, wide-angle, telephoto and zoom lenses. Choose the Canon EF 100-400 I.S. lens, for example, and you can get some killer pics for the memorabilia room.

LOWER THE ZOOM A Canon EOS digital SLR and EF lens bring distant action home.

SPACE RACE

Road tripping? Good luck finding a game, or even a score, on the radio when driving many country highways. Enter satellite radio. The two purveyors of space-based broadcasting, XM and Sirius, ask you to pay $10 and $13 a month, respectively, for 100-plus channels of music, talk, comedy and sports beamed to an in-dash unit you buy for $100 to $500.

XM and Sirius have the sports news and chat channels you'd expect, including ESPN and Fox Sports (for XM). Sirius just acquired near-space rights to NFL games, and XM did the same with MLB. XM also has channels dedicated to ACC, Pac-10 and Big Ten football and hoops. That's a field day for fans and alumni, and it comes down from above in clean, digital sound that many compare to CD quality.

Satellite for cars has been around, but now you can get home-based boom boxes, tuners and receivers to plug into your audio system. And portable players let you have your satellite whilst out for a run.

GEAR TO GO

When you hit the road for work, the compact productivity gadget you carry to make calls, check e-mail and browse the Web also puts a lot of sports access in the palm of your hand. Companies keep coming out with new ones that rev up more communication, Web-cruising and memory power, so you can select one with just the right features to satisfy your sports jones (and the work thing, too). The trap is choosing a unit that's too many things in one, warns Mark Guibert, VP of marketing at Research in Motion, manufacturer of BlackBerry handhelds. "That's the Swiss Army knife approach," he says. "The unit has a lot of features, but does none of them particularly well."

Three of the newest power portables—BlackBerry's 7100t, HP's iPAQ 6315 and Motorola's MPx—nicely portray the range. They are all cell phones, so you can endlessly debate off-season trades. They all have Web access, though in different formats because of their screen sizes. HP has the "biggest" at 3½ inches and will put up Web pages that fairly resemble the ones you see at home. The HP and Motorola handhelds can stream radio, so if your fave sports station has a Web address, you can listen to it anywhere. That kind of wireless power also lets you pick up video clips of key plays and access and store huge amounts of stats, to manage your fantasy teams like you never left home. For talking trash over e-mail and IM, all these units have "full" keyboards. Added bonus: The Motorola and HP come with a little camera, perfect for when you've got a NASCAR pit pass. E-mail friends a shot of you next to the 24 car.

Oh, that's right. Any of these technogoodies might actually be what you'll have to give away to someone else this holiday. Well, there's still time to drop hints upon beloved family members who understand your thirst for all things sports. But if you fear that polite requests or even overt begging might not work—heck, buy two.

Created by the SI Editorial Projects Department: Brad Young, Director; John Jaxheimer, Art Director; Alec Morrison, Writer; Jordan Hyman, Researcher. ©2004 Time Inc.

BEST BUY
Thousands of Possibilities
GET YOURS
© 2004 Best Buy
BestBuy.com

The Color Of Sp

Many fans just can't believe that **Jeremy Wariner**, the Olympic 400-meter champ, is white—and they've argued it out on the Web

BY GARY SMITH

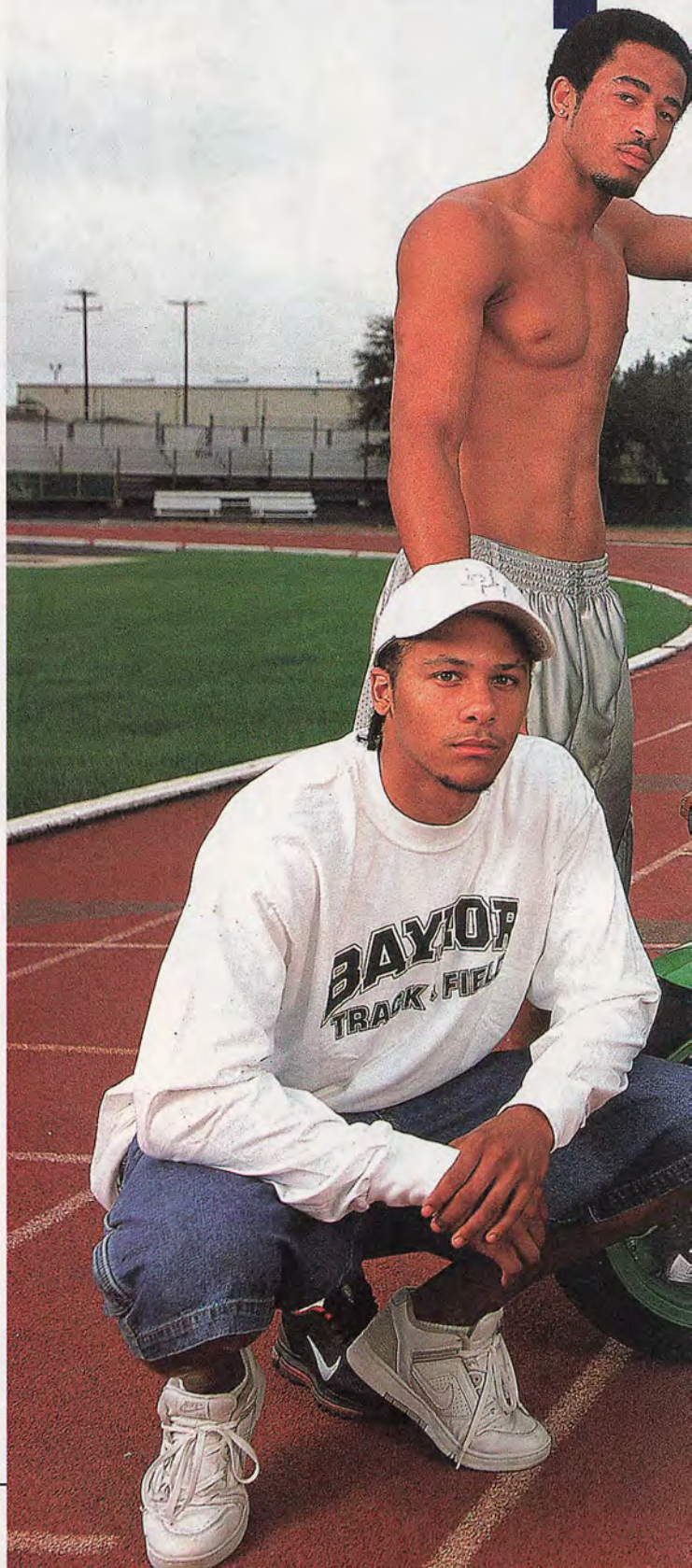
Photograph by Manuello Paganelli

RE: Why isn't Jeremy Wariner more popular?

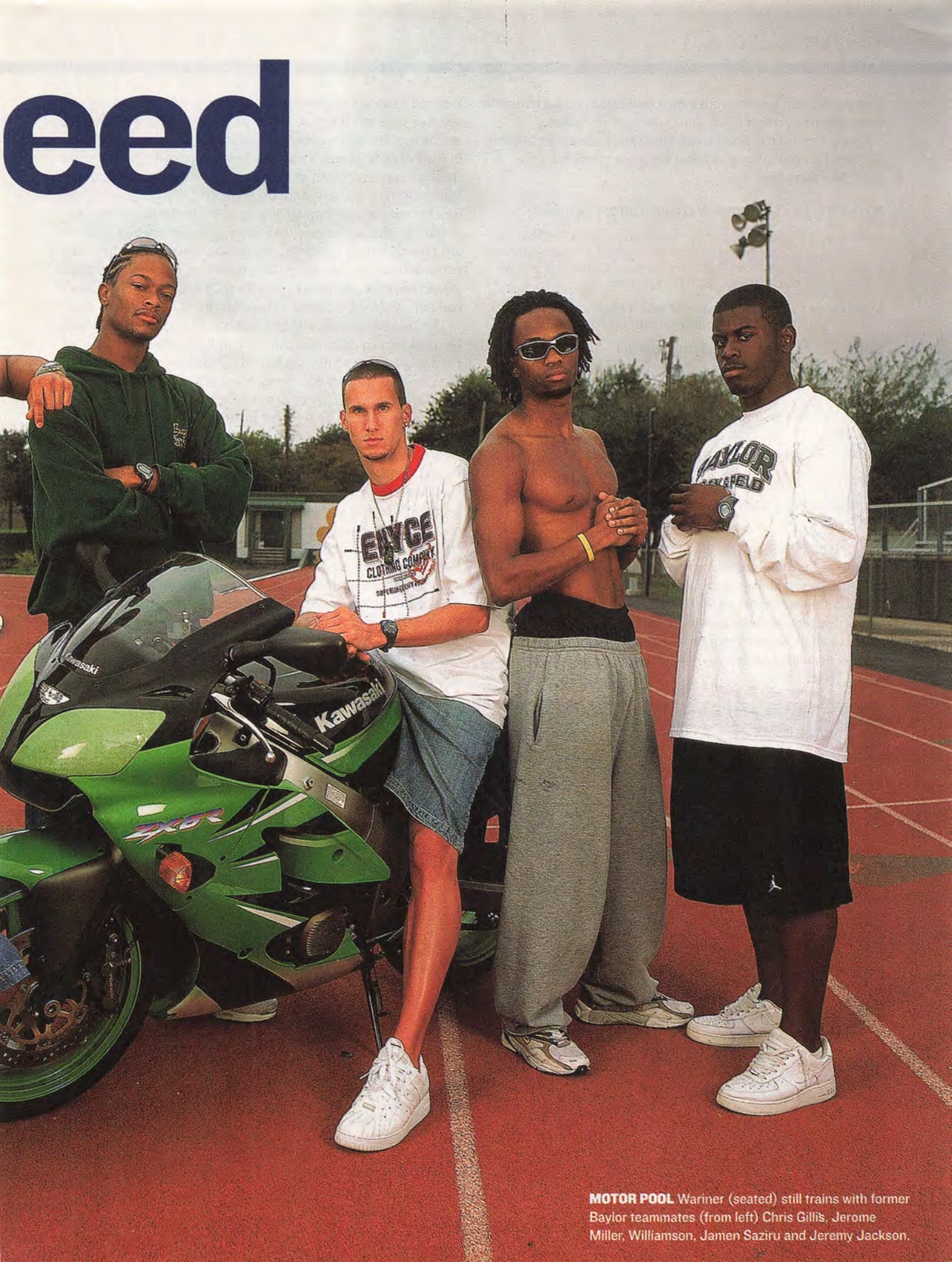
macker▸	Because 99% of the USA doesn't know anything about T+F. . . .
Right▸	Because he is the perfect model for drugs in sports. White Guy Sophomore in College Fastest Time in the World RIIIIIIIIIGGGHHHHHHTTTTTTTTTT
ttc▸	A big part of the conversation about Wariner is that he is white. Because he's white, he would make a great 800m runner. . . .
Could I be good?▸	Why would he make a great 800 runner because he is white?
ChinaFan▸	Is common knowledge that Blacks run fast 400m. Whites run fast 800m. And Asians run fast marathons. All stereotypically speaking.
trackstar▸	Common knowledge says that you are an idiot. . . .
IL(L) Runner▸	On the topic of Blacks vs. Whites in the speed category, isn't there some differnce in the muscle structure or even the tendons or ligiments between the two? Doesn't anyone have any information on this?
not PC▸	Jeremy Wariner is not more popular because the liberal media does not want to see a white man succeed in a black man's sport. . . .
African▸	hey Africans run fast marathons not Asians, fool. . . !
Rodney King▸	Why can't you simply appreciate Jeremy's talent and ignore his race? It's truly sad that so many people on this site get hung up on skin color.

ON A red polyurethane oval in the heart of Texas, a young man is running counterclockwise loops today. He has been on national TV for, oh, maybe seven or eight minutes in his life, just long enough to do something no white man from the U.S. had done in the Olympics in 40 years. Just long enough to annihilate all sorts of assumptions about the color, physique and age required for an American male to win a sprint gold medal. But not *all* the assumptions.

He came out of nowhere, a blank slate, and he blurred lines



eed



MOTOR POOL Wariner (seated) still trains with former Baylor teammates (from left) Chris Gillis, Jerome Miller, Williamson, Jamen Saziru and Jeremy Jackson.

that people had grown accustomed to. He was an invitation to everyone to fill in that blank and draw their own lines.

I wish I could tell you a remarkable story about the 20-year-old who just did this remarkable thing, but there isn't one, so I can't. The story here is us.

RE: Why isn't Jeremy Wariner more popular?

××××▸	Race has less to do with it than "tribal" affiliation; a black Kenyan is not the same as a black Sudanese. Likewise a white Slav is not the same as a white Englishman. Read the journals.
Youngton▸	. . . the guy hangs out with a black coach and black company. That may explain his success.
mitz▸	I'm black and I think he is hot. . . .
pappas▸	his coach is white
lobo▸	. . . Our two other black finalists could have been on the juice rather than Jeremy.
Speed Kills▸	. . . My impression is that it's political correctness: Sprinters are "supposed" to be poor black kids. . . .
oops! ▸	I think it's the in-bred look that's hurting him. . . .
Moving to Bucharest▸	Why don't his sunglasses fall off when he runs?

OH, THERE may be a few things to say about him, how he came to look and talk and do the startling things he did in Athens. But trust me, he's so modest and mild that you'd never dream he'd stir up such a ruckus on the websites and message boards back home.

Not that he was always so mellow. In fact, he was downright devilish as a child, absolute murder in a movie theater. He would lose the plot in no time, launch out of his seat and up the aisle five times a flick. He'd lose focus in class, start fidgeting and whispering, then turn red when the teacher asked him a question. On road-melting summer days in Arlington, Texas, when his parents were at work and all his older sister and brother wanted to do was go slack-jawed in front of their favorite TV shows, Jeremy's pestering would make them so crazy that they'd invite him to follow them through an upstairs bedroom window onto the roof, then slip back inside and lock the window, marooning him up there for the rest of the day.

But the Ritalin worked. Told he had attention deficit disorder after nearly failing first grade, he resisted the medication at first because it sapped his energy. But his sister, Jennifer, who often looked after him, wouldn't stand for it. "I don't care if he doesn't want it!" she'd yelp. "Shove it down his throat like you do a dog!"

The kid took the pills and chilled. School became bearable once he could remain calm, blend in with the other kids and scrape by. He was actually a gentle, shy boy who loathed attention and conflict; he'd fall silent or walk away when either one reared its head in a classroom or on the ballfields where he spent his free time.

From his parents he received no athletic legacy. His father, a landscape designer and as down-to-earth a man as you'd ever meet, grew up with a clubfoot that wasn't surgically repaired until he was 19, and Jeremy's mother, a paralegal, didn't play sports in school. But they bequeathed him something else, maybe rarer: an openness to people of all colors and creeds. At the day-care center that his mom opened in their home when he was a toddler, Jeremy played with Hot Wheels with a boy who was half-Taiwanese and listened to stories alongside two boys from India. He pieced together puzzles with a pair of African-American boys and raced around the house with the two half-Japanese boys who lived behind him.

"I was brought up," he says, "to believe that a person is a person."

SHADES OF GREATNESS Wariner led a medal sweep in the Olympic 400 with second-place finisher Harris (left) and Derrick Brew.

SIMON BRUTY

RE: Why isn't Jeremy Wariner more popular?

sub 2 800▸ yes that is true in some cases black people have an advantage due to the fact that their bodies get oxygen to their muscles faster. It has been proven but its not in all black people. It can also be found in some white people. . . .

GO JW!▸ I CAN'T BELIEVE SOMEONE HAD MY LAST COMMENT REMOVED. IF YOU CAN'T TAKE THE HEAT . . . DON'T DISH IT OUT! AND FOR THE PERSON WHO WROTE THAT JEREMY IS THE PERFECT MODEL FOR DRUGS . . . WOW, MAYBE YOU SHOULD GO BACK TO SCHOOL AND LEARN A LITTLE MORE ABOUT STEROIDS. LOOK AT HIM! HAVE YOU EVER SEEN SOMEONE ON STEROIDS? OR MAYBE I SHOULD ASK IF YOU HAVE EVER SEEN A PICTURE OF JEREMY!

Sacha▸ Actually, I believe it has to do with the amount of calcium one can produce. Scientifically, when doing athletic exertions like running and jumping, the body needs, I think, calcium to power the cells and muscles. The cells of black people are able to produce more calcium than the cells of white people. . . .

bobberrrrrr▸ your common knowledge is the reason USA basketball got busted in the ass . . . keep ur comon knowledge to yourself.

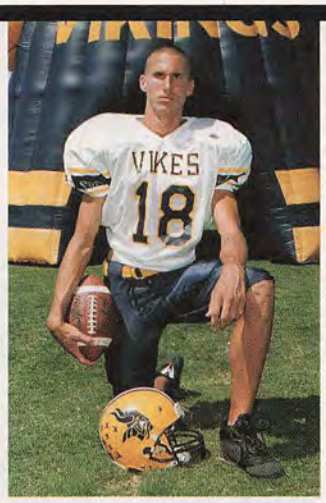
PEOPLE FIRST realized the boy was fast when he and his African-American pal Kyle Williams kept breaking out of the herd of six-year-olds chasing a ball across rec-league soccer fields in the Dallas–Fort Worth metroplex, leaving the rabble in the distance. But no one knew that he was *fast* fast until his growth spurt came at age 14 and the defensive-backs coach at Arlington Lamar High kept seeing this skinny freshman wide receiver fly past the varsity cornerbacks during spring practice as if they were fence posts. That coach, Mike Nelson, happened to be the head track coach. "You ought to run track," said Nelson.

"I play baseball," Jeremy replied.

Two months of rotting on the freshman baseball team bench corrected this notion. The next year, after his basketball season ended, Jeremy appeared on the track a few weeks after practice had begun. He trained just a few days, then was entered in a jayvee meet. He demolished the 400-meter field by 40 meters, broke the school's sophomore record with a 50.8 and walked off the track as if he'd just taken a jog around the block. "If that kid's on your jayvee," gulped the opposing coach, "you must have one heck of a varsity." He was promoted to the varsity for the next meet and tied the school record with a 48.8.

It worked better than Ritalin, this new sport. All the stress and distractions he felt in the classroom melted away as he blazed around the curves and down the straightaways; he could relax and focus for hours, absorb every detail on a track. All the frustration he'd see in the eyes of his mother—an admitted perfectionist who would refold towels and sheets if someone else had folded them—as she rode him to finish his homework each day would vanish as she leaped to her feet, bellowing as he blazed for the finish line, *"Go, baby, go!"*

Reggie Harrell, Arlington High's record-setting senior hurdler, at first couldn't believe that a skinny white sophomore could glide with him and the other black runners in practice, stride for stride. But the bony newcomer had a sweet, endearing nature, not a trace



FIRST LOVE Wariner played football in elementary and high school and wanted to in college before concentrating exclusively on track.

COURTESY OF LINDA M. WARINER (2); GARY HERSHORN/REUTERS (BOTTOM)

of machismo in him, so Reggie gave him a sweet, endearing nickname, an African-American one that meant *little guy*. Jeremy became Pookie to the brotherhood of sprinters and soon cherished his new name.

RE: Why isn't Jeremy Wariner more popular?

keeper▸ Because Black ppl have more "fast twitch fibers" than white ppl

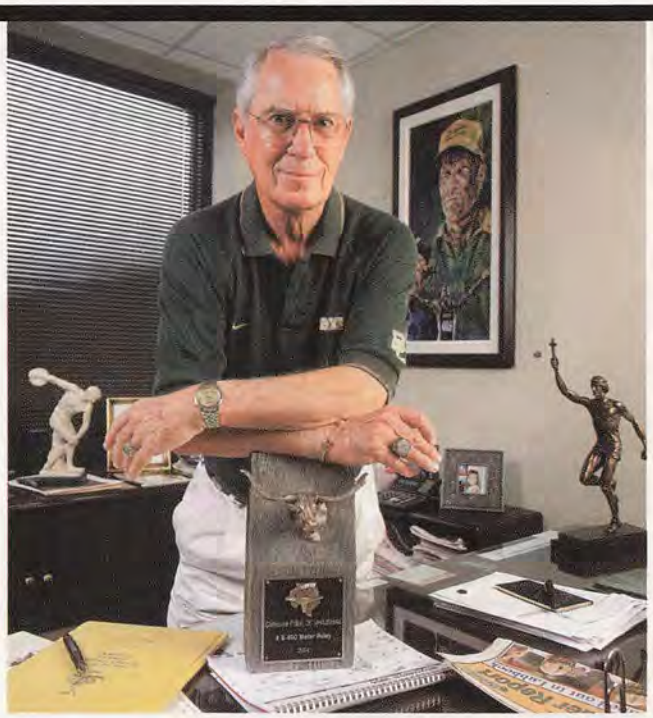
Because▸ Because he wears sunglasses, and thus, looks emotionless.

I////I'm all e▸ For one he looks like a geek. Two, he tried to act as if he is black. And third, he thinks he is the greaest thing since sliced bread. And get rid of the sunglasses unless you're running during the day!

LOLO▸ HE'S HOT! I LIKE SKINNY WHITE GUYS. FROM: MIA/LATINA

SURE, HE heard what buzzed through the crowd when he and seven African-Americans coiled into the starting blocks for the 200-meter and 400-meter sprints: *Man, what's that white boy doin' out there?* Sure, he stuck out in his new surroundings. But not for long.

He had already traded his long, curly hair for a clean buzz.



MAN WITH THE PLAN Coach Hart's training program and race strategy made Wariner believe he would win the Olympics.

Now he quietly observed and began to blend in, the way he had years earlier in the classroom. His voice inflections changed. A little bounce came into his walk. Like many white suburban kids watching hip-hop videos, he began wearing baggier clothes. Hours of training under the Texas sun burnished his skin to the coloring of his Cherokee great-great-great-grandmother. The alternative rock he'd favored in middle school disappeared from his radio. Off he'd roll in his car, driving his new track buddies home after practice, Jay-Z and Lil' Wayne booming from the speakers. "He just molds to the environment he's in," says teammate Korey Wright.

Half of the kids at his high school were of African, Asian or Hispanic descent. More and more, that was the half he hung with. Pookie came to a few conclusions about African-Americans. "They aren't judgmental," he says. "They don't worry as much about popularity."

African-Americans came to a few conclusions about Pookie. "You see a lot of white guys trying to act black and a lot of black guys trying to act white," says Darold Williamson, a world-class sprinter who would end up being Jeremy's best friend at college. "Guys trying to be cool by being somebody else. Not Jeremy. He's not forcing anything. He's real free about life. He goes with the flow, he doesn't obsess over stuff like some white guys do. He's always just himself. That's why it's so easy for African-Americans to accept him."

The more he looked and acted as if he belonged on that oval, the more he *felt* it. What others felt didn't faze him, didn't even seem to register. Sometimes his mother wondered if she'd overprotected him. He seemed naive to harsh realities, unaware of any lane markers between blacks and whites. "I've heard about racists on TV," he would say. "But I've never seen a racist. I've never seen racism."

So this was the extraordinary cocktail that the white boy brought to the starting blocks: familiarity . . . relaxation . . . focus . . . innocence . . . and hair-on-fire speed. A few seconds after he launched, *Man, what's that white boy doin' out there?* became *Man, you SEE that white boy RUN?* By the end of his senior year Jeremy had posted the year's fastest 200-meter and second-fastest 400-meter high school times in the U.S.

In the *whoosh* of one race, a woman in the stands turned to Jeremy's mom in disbelief. The woman couldn't help herself, couldn't keep the words inside her mouth. "Is he mixed?" she blurted.

RE: Why is it A BIG DEAL that Jeremy Wariner is white?

Vipam▸ . . . It seems to me that many of you are displaying borderline racist view points in my opinion!!!

kmh▸ . . . I assume he is not of West African descent. . . . Do we know this for certain?

redmeansdead▸ . . . I was more surprised at the fact Jeremy is so young rather than the fact that he is white.

Apple Cider Vinegar▸ Ignoring race is dillusional.

9▸ . . . If you are celebrating that a WHITE guy won a 'sprint', then i could look at it the other way, you being happy BLACK guys lost.

dk46▸ . . . So if I'd phrased my shock by saying a thin guy won the 400m, would you call me prejudiced towards the muscularly ripped-challenged . . . ?

BigTex▸ . . . I guess it's only racist if someone is proud of the accomplishments of white people. . . .

NO ONE, of any color, had the market on misconceptions cornered. The Florida A&M track coach caught wind of Jeremy's times and telephoned Coach Nelson to make a recruiting pitch.

"Isn't . . . uh . . . isn't Florida A&M a predominantly black university?" Nelson asked delicately.

"Yes, it is," said the recruiter.

"Well, uh . . . did you know that Jeremy Wariner is predominantly white?"

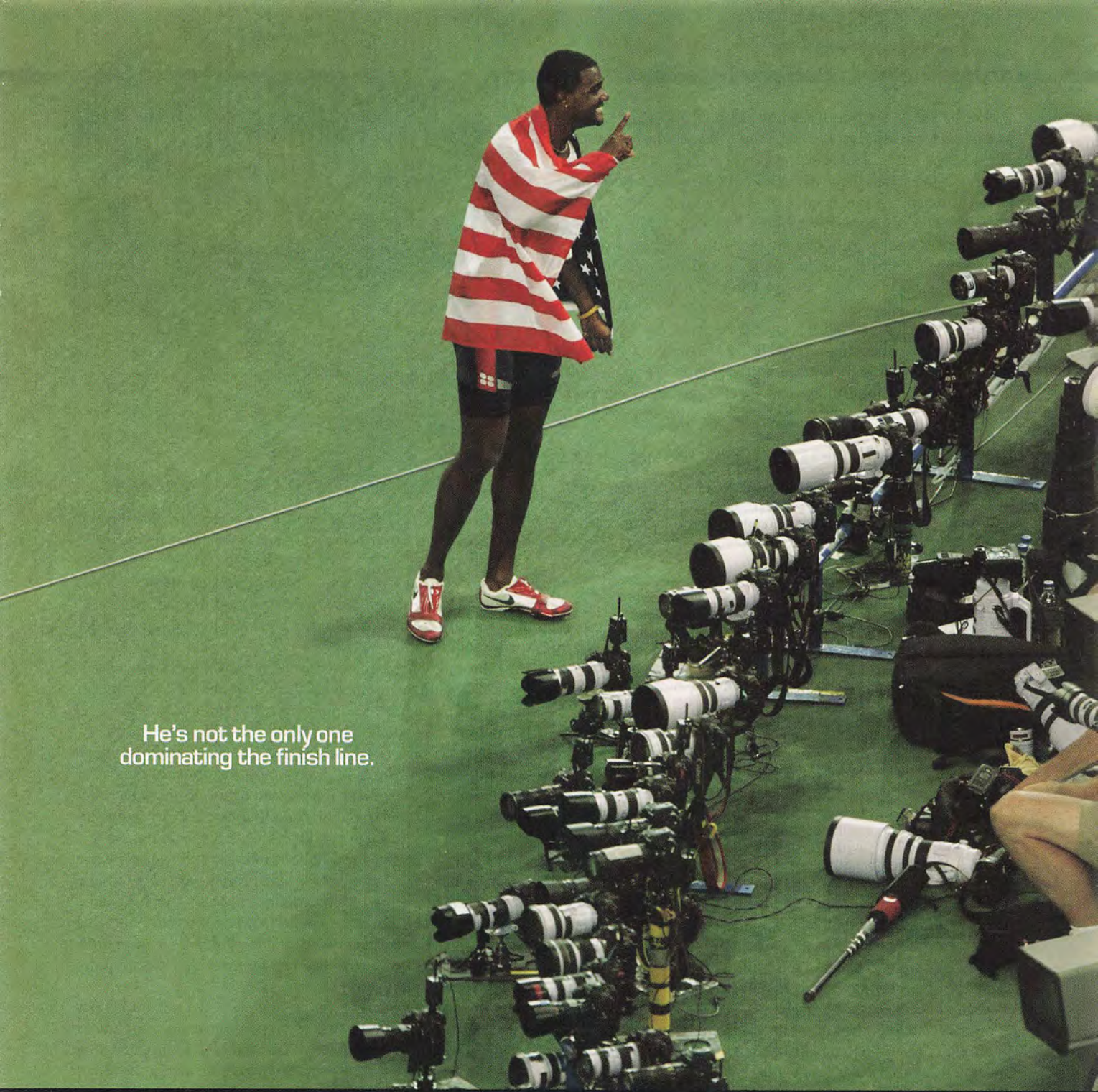
Pause. "No . . . but . . . but that's O.K.," the coach delicately replied.

Even Michael Ford—the African-American assistant track coach at Baylor who had seen Jeremy run and had begun wooing him to the university in Waco, just an hour and a half away from Arlington—assumed that his quarry was biracial.

The quarterback on Jeremy's team had trouble throwing the ball as far as Jeremy could run a 4½-second route, but Jeremy was probably too thin to be a Division I wide receiver anyway. He still had Friday-night lights in his eyes, though, so he didn't jump at the track offers pouring in. He made an oral commitment to Baylor when it offered him a football scholarship, then despaired when the coach at the time, Kevin Steele, realized he had made too many scholarship offers and yanked Jeremy's.

By then a white-haired man had shown up at his door. He was genuine—dignified and funny too. He was also the maestro of the 200 and 400 meters, the finest long-sprint coach in the world, the man who'd mentored Michael Johnson: Baylor head track coach Clyde Hart. Jeremy swallowed his football disappointment, chose Baylor anyway and whittled his two dreams down to one. "I want to run in the Olympics," he told Coach Hart.

MANUELLO PAGANELLI



It's those distinctive white Canon lenses. In fact, look at the sidelines of just about every major sporting event in the world, and you'll see those white lenses almost exclusively. Because Canon cameras and lenses are the equipment of choice for 90% of *Sports Illustrated* staff photographers and the majority of the top newspapers in the country.

Why? Because, just like on the track, you have to be more than just fast. You need durability, quality and superior technology. And the same technology that makes Canon cameras and lenses virtually an industry standard goes into every piece of equipment Canon makes. So when you're choosing a system, remember, nobody can beat Canon's track record.

Canon KNOW HOW®

digital REVOLUTIONIZED photography ■ we REVOLUTIONIZED digital™

© 2004 Canon U.S.A., Inc. Canon and Canon Know How are registered trademarks and digital REVOLUTIONIZED photography ■ we REVOLUTIONIZED digital are trademarks of Canon Inc. in the United States and may also be registered trademarks or trademarks in other countries. Visit us at www.canoneos.com or call 1-800-OK-CANON. Photo: Smiley Pool/*Dallas Morning News*. Taken with: Canon EOS-1D Mark II + EF 400, f2.8 IS lens with 1.4 tele-extender. ISO: 800, shutter: 1/500, aperture: 4.0. *Sports Illustrated* is a registered trademark of Time Inc. Used with permission.

Hart looked at the rail-thin white kid, 6' 1" and 145 pounds. A half-century earlier Hart had been the 100-yard-dash champion of Arkansas. Forbidden by segregation to compete in an official meet with the state's black champ—a guy everybody called Cornelius Mitchell, who years later would become the first African-American signed by the Washington Redskins, a future Hall of Fame flanker known as Bobby Mitchell—the two boys from Hot Springs met on a track that had gone to seed and went head-to-head in a series of informal races. The kids watching laid bets. Hart beat Mitchell every time.

"Sure," Coach Hart told Jeremy. "We'll make the Olympics a goal." He was a patient man who believed in building a 400-meter sprinter's strength and endurance slowly, the way he had with Johnson, whose shiniest days came well after his Baylor years. "We'll aim for 2008."

RE: Why is it A BIG DEAL that Jeremy Wariner is white?

isagt▸ It's important because for decades whites have been at the end of an orchestrated campaign to browbeat them into thinking that they cannot compete with blacks and others.

just kidding▸ Because his parents are black!

trackshard▸ . . . It is a big deal that he is white and that fast. I'm a white 400m runner from NYC and for years I've stood out for no other reason besides my race. However, there has always seemed to me to be a barrier that my race puts up that stops me from entering the next level (which I know is a feeling other white sprinters I talk to have). What is important about Jeremy Wariner is that he just shattered that barrier.

Critic100▸ Wariner suffers from the same condition as Michael Jackson

puntificating▸ Running is entirely too racist.
100m, 200m, 400m, 5000m, 10000m, marathon. . . .
What's with all the different races?
Can't we all just run together?

ONE DAY last spring, the legend appeared at Baylor. Pookie's teammates flocked to Michael Johnson, all aflutter, eager to bathe in his five-gold-medal glow. Jeremy stood quietly to the side. At last Johnson went to *him* and introduced himself. From that moment Johnson—the master of containment—knew that the sophomore might be something special.

Injuries had kept the kid in the weeds his freshman year. But Johnson noticed something else. "Jeremy's his own person, but he has one thing that I had," says Johnson. "He hates to lose, but he's not *afraid* to lose. It's a fine line, but this kid just gets it—that attitude of, You can't beat me, even if I don't win today. It comes from complete confidence in himself and his preparation. He believes totally in Coach Hart's training program and strategy. Too many athletes identify themselves too much with winning and losing and what that means about them as a person. You can see them before a race thinking of the consequences if they lose—what will people think, what will the media say, what will my father or mother think of me, how much money will I lose? Some of them deal with that fear by jumping around and entertaining the crowd, some of them turn it inward. Either way, they're using energy. What you're about to do takes so much energy that you can't waste *any*. Whereas Jeremy is just being Jeremy, thinking that all he can do is run this race the best he can, focusing on the things he can control and not worrying a bit about what he can't, or what the consequences might be. That focus sets him apart."

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT Johnson, a gold medalist and former Bear himself, went from being Wariner's idol to being his agent.

DAVID GRAY/REUTERS

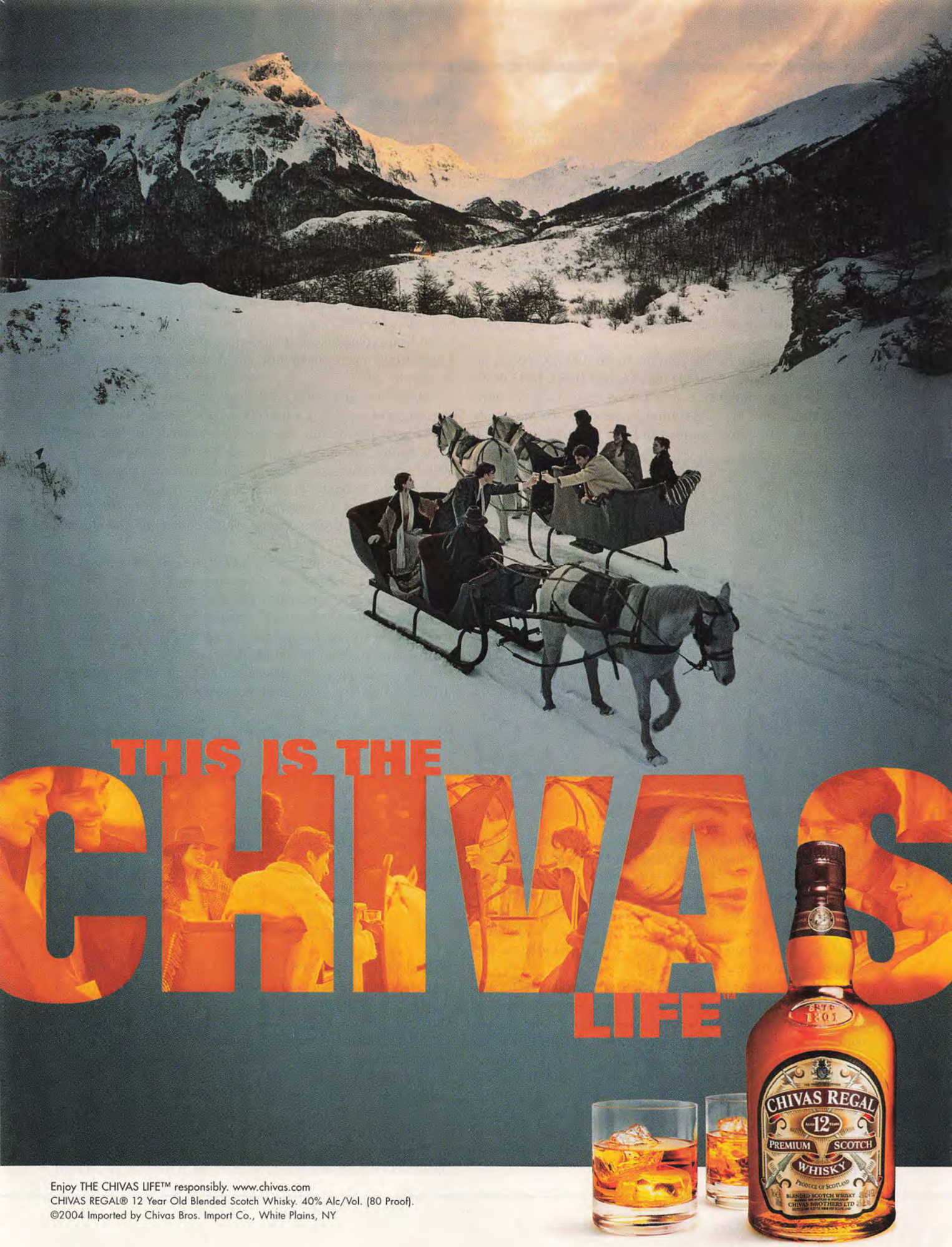
At the end of his sophomore year, Jeremy moved into a house just off Baylor's campus with three teammates: a black 800-meter runner whose parents came from Kenya, a black long jumper from New Jersey and a white 400-meter runner from Indiana. But Jeremy's closest friend was his closest rival—teammate and 400-meter sprinter Williamson—a relationship nearly unprecedented in the annals of track and testosterone. What other world-class 400-meter man had another one of nearly equal talent pushing him, and supporting him, every day in practice?

No injury interrupted Jeremy's second year at Baylor. He began tearing tenths of a second off his best times with each passing week, tearing Coach Hart's timetable to tatters—a jet hissing beneath the radar of American sports fans and international track. He won the NCAA indoors 400, then the outdoors a few months later, then the Olympic trials a few months after that, passing every drug test along the way.

By then he ran wearing a mini-goatee, a silver chain his parents had given him and a pair of zirconium earrings he'd picked up for 20 bucks. He tried to let his hair grow out so he could braid it, but he couldn't bear the long, curly locks he saw in the mirror and went back to the buzz cut. "You know you're not white, Pookie," his black teammates teased him, and Jeremy laughed and teased them back.

Just for the hell of it, he wore sunglasses one night last spring at an outdoor meet. Darold grinned and did it too. The shades kept Jeremy from looking around just before a race, and everyone else from looking in. No longer did he notice if anyone was staring at the one white boy in a field of eight sprinters. The sunglasses made everything blend, smudged all the lines.

But was that such a big deal? A 20-year-old doing what 20-year-olds do, experimenting with superficialities and ending up dressing and talking and looking pretty much like most of the guys he hung out with? Maybe you once did that. Maybe you still do.



Enjoy THE CHIVAS LIFE™ responsibly. www.chivas.com
CHIVAS REGAL® 12 Year Old Blended Scotch Whisky. 40% Alc/Vol. (80 Proof).
©2004 Imported by Chivas Bros. Import Co., White Plains, NY

RE: 44.37

Anonymous▸ J. WARINER LOOKS LIKE A REJECT EMINEM BACK-UP SINGER. GREAT TO SEE A WHITE SPRINTER STALKIN THE BROTHERS—BUT HE AINT NO BROTHER, DUDES—LET'S LOSE THE GHETTO CHAIN AND THE PIMPIN SHADES. I NOTICED A LOT OF BROTHERS SEEM EMBARRASSED AND SURPRISED AT THE SAME TIME—WHASSUP WITH JOHN BOY WALTON SMOKIN MY ASS ON THE BACKSTRETCH? AND WHYS HE WEARING PAWN SHOP ITEMS?

bigred▸ . . . I'm sure he'll give a damn about your fashion advice when he's takin his victory lap in Athens.

TWO YEARS earlier, he was running in front of 300 people at the Hoot Smith Relays at Central Junior High in Hurst, Texas. Now Jeremy, the 150-pound waif competing on foreign soil for only the third time in his life, was running against the world's seven other fastest 400-meter sprinters in front of 87,000 people in

FORWARD PASS Wariner ceded the anchor leg in the Olympic 4×400 to his pal Williamson, who carried the U.S. baton to victory.

Athens and hundreds of millions of television viewers worldwide.

Coach Hart churned inside and paced. Jeremy looked as if he were still at the Hoot Smith, and why not, after the way he'd dusted the competition in the quarter- and semifinal heats the previous two days?

"Let's hit the 200 split at 21.3 to 21.5," Hart instructed him. Jeremy, with his uncanny internal clock, nailed it in 21.3 and still found himself trailing U.S. teammate Otis Harris . . . and still remained astonishingly fluid, his relaxed limbs flowing down the stretch as thicker rivals strained and tied up. Finishing in 44 seconds flat, he led a U.S.A. medal sweep, became the first white American to win an Olympic sprint since Mike Larrabee in the 400 in 1964, the first white American to win gold in *any* track event since Dave Wottle in the 800 in 1972 . . . and the first man ever to pull off an NCAA indoors/NCAA outdoors/Olympic trials/Olympics sweep in a single year.

First thing out of his mouth, when he saw Coach Hart on the edge of the track, was, "Coach, I got the school record!"

"Yeah," said Hart, the ever-demanding father, "but you didn't go 43."

"It'll give me something to work for," vowed Jeremy.

Michael Johnson, who didn't bust 45 seconds until his senior year at Baylor, hurried to trackside from his BBC press-row perch. "Jeremy, do you realize what you've just done?" Johnson cried.

"Right now I've got to focus on the four-by-four relay," replied Jeremy.

Johnson blinked. "I'm thinking, First of all, that's a few days from now, and second, if you're on the United States' four-by-four relay, you don't focus on it, you just run and don't drop the baton," says Johnson. "You kind of want to shake him and say, 'Celebrate! Jump around a little. Be a kid, be silly, say something stupid—be *20*!' "

Pookie didn't hit the town. He didn't celebrate. He had downed seven shots of tequila once at a college party, and that had been the end of party life for him. He barely even flashed his gold medal to his family, and he casually tossed the wreath he wore on the medal stand to his sister to keep. Hell, he never even bothered to check out the Acropolis, the Parthenon or anything else in Athens during the Games. He did what he usually did: surfed the Internet, watched TV, text-messaged and IM'd friends and slept, a homebody far from home.

Four days later he ran the third leg of the USA's winning 400-meter relay. He could've run the anchor leg, the historical prerogative of the gold medalist in the 400, but he turned it down. He wanted his pal Darold, who always ran anchor on Baylor's 400-meter relay team, to hit the tape and take the limelight.

It was time to go home, but Jeremy didn't have to pack his suitcase. He was so eager to see Michelle Milton, his African-American girlfriend, that he'd packed it three days early.

RE: Sprinter's speed isn't Black or White issue

Runninghorse▸ I've been saying it for years: only in the US, the coaches put the white guys out to the distance pastures and the black guys on the speedway. Its all based on mythology.

Answer Giver▸ Let's stir the pot (klansmen and panthers free your mind and your ass will follow). . . .

The Fern▸ Does anyone else sometimes see this message board as a whole pasture of dead horses being beaten to death by a bunch of guys who think they know everything, trying to convince everyone else that they do.

THE STENCH of dead horseflesh is no easy thing to dispel. A man reading this story might easily despair, concluding that it's hopeless, that it'll never happen . . . unless he takes a step backward from the pasture, and then another and another, all the way back to where the white-haired man is standing. Imagine how different it all looks and smells from 70-year-old Clyde Hart's perspective.

Imagine that your first day on the job was in 1957 in Little Rock, where you're assigned to search lockers for bombs while busloads of white people prevent nine black children from walking through the doors of your high school, requiring the 101st Airborne to occupy the school for the rest of the year to prevent

ERIC FEFERBERG/AFP/GETTY

BREAKING NEWS:

NATION RALLIES BEHIND MASSIVE VH1 POP CULTURE EVENT

LIVE

Performances by:

BLACK EYED PEAS
GREEN DAY
MAROON 5
VELVET REVOLVER

Appearances by:

ELLEN DEGENERES
P. DIDDY
PARIS HILTON
JOSH DUHAMEL
WILLIAM SHATNER
DONALD TRUMP
PAUL HAMM
USHER
THE CAST OF ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

...and more

Chaos broke out this week in New [illegible]city at ▲
MARY-KATE and ASHLEY'S 18th birthday party after ▼
MARTHA STEWART's "Sweater-Set Malfunction" caused
Gov. HOWARD DEAN to squeal upsetting baby APPLE and
ELTON JOHN causing him to scream "rude vile baby!" ▲
at which time MICHAEL MOORE made his entrance on
MEL GIBSON's shoulders attacking Swift Boat veterans
with Heinz ketchup bottles when an errant bottle hit.....
PARIS HILTON's pooch TINKERBELL but luckily Gov. ▲
JIM MCGREEVEY was on hand to calm her just before ▲
announcing he was a gay American and asking LANCE
▲ ARMSTRONG to pedal him and MARY CHENEY to.....
.....Massachusetts in a rickshaw just before BRITNEY
SPEARS rode in on a float shaped like a weapon of mass
destruction wielding a supersize value meal filled not with fries but
tiny fiancés and FLAVOR FLAV proclaimed he'd
be taking over P. DIDDY's role in Raisin in the

BIG ON 04
VH1.COM/VH1

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5 AT 9/8C
ALL THE BUZZ ON THE YEAR THAT WAS
vh1.com

VH1

™
© 2004 Viacom International Inc. All rights reserved.

MORE TO COME? Wariner (with relay mates, from left, Williamson, Harris and Brew) plans to run through at least the 2012 Games.

violence . . . and to burn your high hurdles at night to stay warm. Imagine that six years later you're promoted to coach at Baylor, in perhaps the most prestigious athletic conference in the land—the Southwest Conference—where not a single black man competes in track and field . . . until you bring in one of the first two, Ronnie Allen, just before the '70s roll in. You turn around, and it's the '90s already, and you're the coach of a black millionaire sprinter named Michael Johnson as he stands in the middle of an Olympic stadium in northern Georgia and flings his golden shoes into the adoring crowd. Turn around again and you're the coach of a gold-medal-winning Southern white youth who *chooses* the look and style of a black youth as he sprints right through what's left of the barriers because he never even *sees* any barriers. Imagine all that occurring in less than 50 years, in the course of one man's working days, and then smell the air again.

"People just don't realize what sports has done in this country," says Hart. "It's mixed kids together and made them realize that some things they've been taught about people aren't true. It's been the great equalizer in America.

"There's absolutely been a barrier for white sprinters in America. There's a stigma there. White kids think that it's a black kids' sport, that blacks are superior. There are plenty of white kids with fast-twitch fibers, but they've got to get off their rumps. Too many of them would rather go fast on their computers in a fantasy world. It's not about genes, although they may play some part in it. It's about *Do you want it badly enough?*"

Jeremy turned pro when the Olympics ended. He'll continue attending Baylor, a couple of classes a semester, and continue training under Hart even if the coach retires from his Baylor job after next spring's meets. Jeremy plans to run for gold in two or three more Olympics, to double up in the 200 and 400 as soon as he can talk his coach into it . . . and to replace the zirconium earrings with diamonds as soon as the first fat check rolls in.

Of course, he now needs someone to plan his schedule and his travel logistics. So former Baylor sprinter Deon Minor became his manager. And he needs someone to protect his image, represent him in corporate conference rooms, negotiate his track appearances and endorsement deals. So he chose Michael Johnson. It was such an obvious decision, who would even stop to marvel over a white athlete with a black agent?

Sure, the kid might push some people's buttons, but they were all at a far remove . . . buttons on the computers of lonely souls in cyberspace. No such conflict existed in his day-to-day life. And that's the real story down here, deep in the heart of Texas: There is no story. Just a nice, quiet, radically fast young man with no interest in making social statements and no clue as to why anyone—all the reporters who peppered him with questions about race after he won the gold medal, all the people roaming websites, even a writer from SPORTS ILLUSTRATED—would make color an issue. Why anyone would thrust 1957 on *him*.

"My generation doesn't see color the way others did," he says. "I never felt that barrier. Just be yourself, have fun and don't let nothin' bother you. It's not about how you look. It's about how you feel, and I feel more comfortable looking the way I look.

"I don't care what people say. I don't care if my opponents use drugs. If they're using 'em, let 'em use 'em. It'll come back on them some day. Being skinny, I feel like I have an advantage because I have less weight to carry around the track. Race issues, drug issues, I just learned to let 'em go past me. When I get on the track, my mind clears, and all I hear in my head is what Coach Hart told me: Stay focused. Get out strong. Work the turn. Keep your form."

RE: Who says white men can't sprint?

Me Too▸ I believe Wariner is half-white/half-black

Bad Science▸ Poor guy! Can you imagine the problems that can cause?

IF HE'S DIVIDED top/bottom and the top is black, he's stuck being slow. If he's divided left/right, it's a bitch if the white side is on the right, because then he keeps running off the curve from the stronger forces generated by the inside leg. Damn! □

PETER READ MILLER

M1050 Men's high-mileage trainer.
newbalance.com

N is for reeling in so many people, you need a fishing license.
N is for new balance.

achieve new balance

©2004 New Balance Athletic Shoe, Inc.

Inside

The Week In Sports

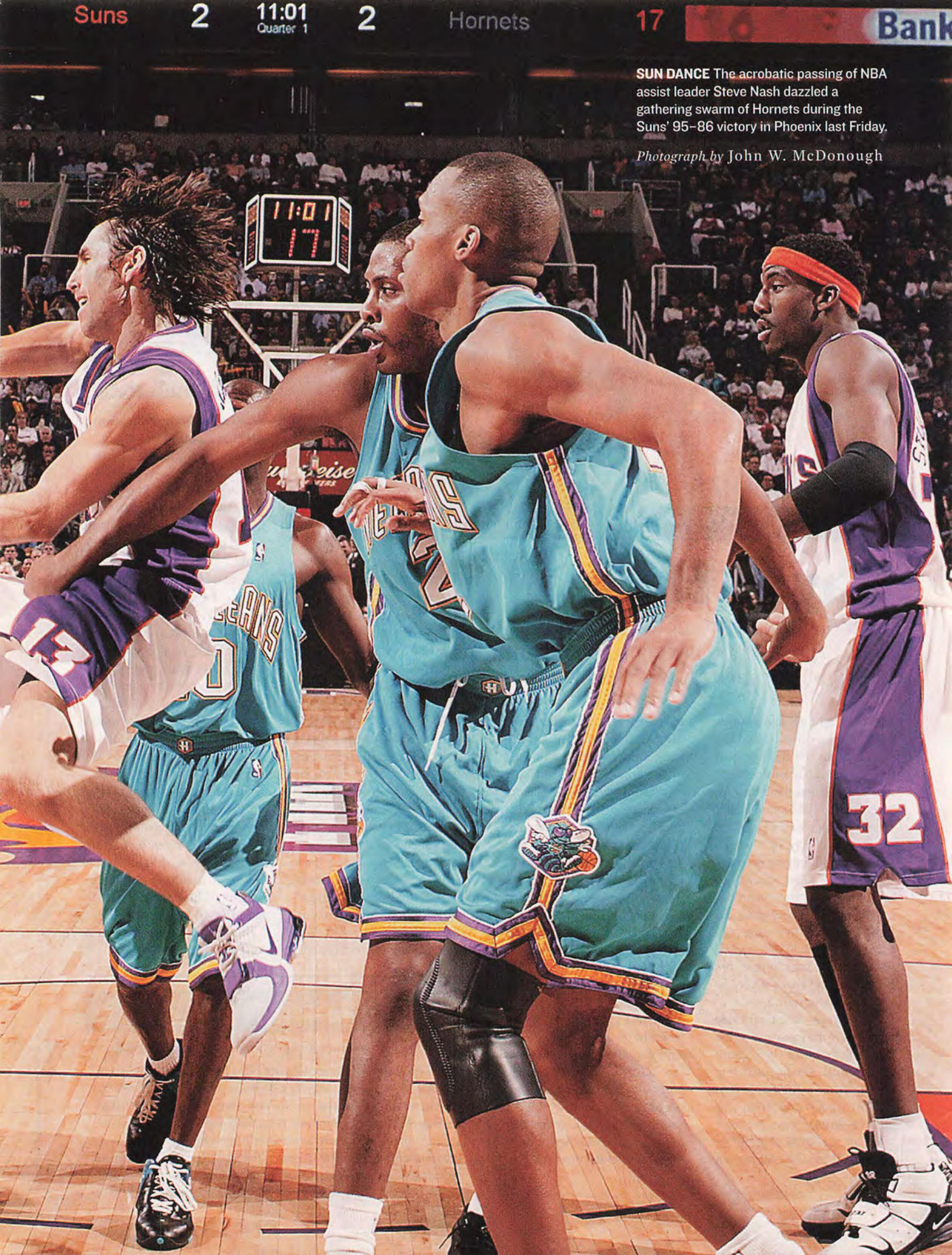
THE NBA
Surprising start has Ray Allen considering re-signing with the Sonics • What Hubie Brown's successor inherits in Memphis

COLLEGE BASKETBALL
Justin Gray leads Wake Forest to the preseason NIT title • Team effort helps Washington win Great Alaska Shootout

COLLEGE FOOTBALL
Eleven coaches have exited in the last month, but who's still on the hot seat? • Showdown Saturday will clear up BCS picture

MOTOR SPORTS
Second in the Chase but an eight-race winner, Jimmie Johnson is SI's Driver of the Year • Gordon versus Schumacher in Paris

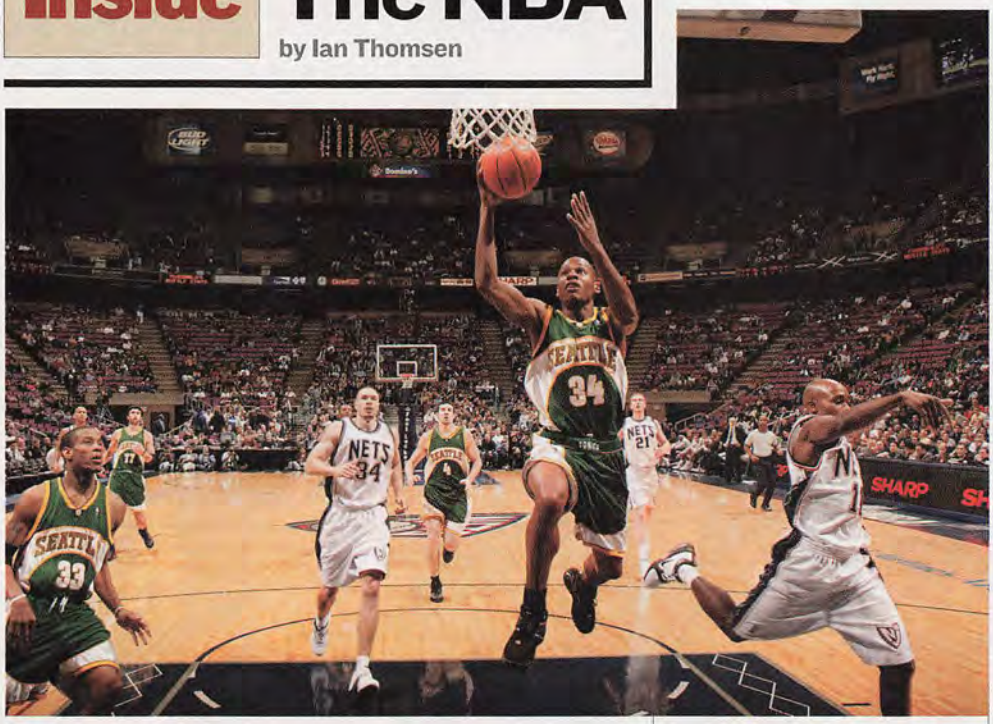
THE NFL
Why Minnesota needs a healthy Randy Moss • Colts wideouts having season to remember, too • Patriots' secret to success



SUN DANCE The acrobatic passing of NBA assist leader Steve Nash dazzled a gathering swarm of Hornets during the Suns' 95–86 victory in Phoenix last Friday.

Photograph by John W. McDonough

by Ian Thomsen



POWER COUPLE When Allen (34) has a rare misfire, Evans comes in handy on the boards.

Ray of Hope

Seattle is off to a scorching start thanks to Ray Allen, who's having so much fun he might just stick around for a while

RAY ALLEN and six of his SuperSonics teammates are in the final year of their contracts, but you don't hear much speculation about their future deals in the Seattle locker room. "I would never say, 'Sign me or I won't play' or 'Give me my money'—I'd never do that," says the 6' 5" Allen, referring to the outrageous preseason demands of the Timberwolves' Latrell Sprewell. "I'm getting paid a lot [$14.6 million this season] to help this team compete and get better, and that's what I'm worrying about right now."

It's easy to see the bright side when you're the top scorer on the team with the league's best record: 13–2 through Sunday, including a 5–1 mark on an 8,000-mile road trip. At week's end Allen was pumping in 24.0 points per game while hitting 48.3% of his three-pointers. "I feel like nothing can go wrong," says Allen. "But at the same time I feel like I have to work even harder to stay on top."

The Sonics got off to a surprising 5–1 start last year before slumping to a 37–45 finish. What may keep them from swooning this season is the emergence of power forwards Reggie Evans, Danny Fortson and Nick Collison, who have quickly developed a synergy with Seattle's perimeter shooters. The rugged big men aren't just setting hard picks for Allen, Rashard Lewis (20.7 points per game through Sunday), Antonio Daniels (13.5) and Vladimir Radmanovic (11.3), they're demolishing Seattle's reputation for softness. After finishing last in the NBA in rebounding in 2003–04, the Sonics were outboarding opponents by 4.2 per game at week's end, second best in the league. And they've ingeniously overcome their low-post deficiencies by snatching a league-high 37.2% of their team's errant shots, leading to easy tip-ins and follows. "Teams are defending so much on the perimeter that they're leaving smalls and single coverages under the boards," says coach Nate McMillan.

At week's end the Sonics had held 12 of their 15 opponents to less than 50% shooting. When they hit an ice-cold stretch this season—which is inevitable for a young, jump-shooting team—it's going to be crucial that both McMillan and management exercise patience. If they can keep this group together and on track for three years, Lewis, Radmanovic, Collison, point guard Luke Ridnour and promising rookie center Robert Swift (all 25 or younger) could form the second coming of the Mavericks, with Allen as their leader. "Ray has reached his full potential, and he just turned 29," says G.M. Rick Sund. "If we keep him, we can have two or three [stars] in their prime at the same time, and that's when you become pretty good."

Sund and agent Lon Babby have held cordial discussions about a five-year extension for Allen, who appears willing to accept less than the $95 million max. Seattle's alternative would be to build up as much as $24 million in cap space by letting Allen go this summer to a team that has the room to sign him: the Bobcats, Clippers, Cavaliers, Hawks or Raptors (should Toronto clear room by trading Vince Carter and Jalen Rose). But neither side wants that to happen. "This is definitely a fun situation to be in," says Allen. "This team can be good for a long time." □

Scout's Take

On the Grizzlies, after coach **Hubie Brown** retired last Thursday:

"Whoever they hire may soon realize that this team overachieved to win 50 games last year without a dominant star. The key decisions will involve rotation and tempo. Are they going to keep going 10 deep the way Hubie did? If so, the new coach may want to run more to take pressure off their mediocre centers and to get more out of **Pau Gasol**, *who has looked passive this season. But that's not an easy solution either; Hubie probably would have gone with a faster style if he'd thought* **Jason Williams** *could play under control while pushing the ball."*

MANNY MILLAN (ALLEN); RON TURENNE/NBAE/GETTY IMAGES

Three Olives™
VODKA

www.ThreeOlives.com

©2004 White Rock Distilleries, Inc. Distilled in England. Imported and bottled by White Rock Distilleries, Inc., Lewiston, ME. 40% Alc./Vol. (80 Proof). PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

Introducing the Nissan Altima SE-R Long before the aluminum pedals and center-mounted gauges, it took on a life all its own. Then came race-inspired seats and monster dual exhausts, and by that time, the 260-horsepower engine couldn't be stopped. The Nissan Altima SE-R. A new creature altogether. For more information, please call 800-NISSAN3 or visit NissanUSA.com.

NISSAN

SHIFT_exhilaration

Nissan, the Nissan Brand Symbol, "SHIFT_" tagline and Nissan model names are Nissan trademarks. Always wear your seat belt, and please don't drink and drive. ©2004 Nissan North America, Inc.

Gray Matters

Wake Forest's Justin Gray showcased his toughness—and talent—in leading the Demon Deacons to the NIT title

EARLY IN the second half of the preseason NIT championship game last Friday night at Madison Square Garden, Arizona coach Lute Olson was frustrated with the inability of senior guard Salim Stoudamire to defend Wake Forest's Justin Gray. "Can you guard him?" Olson asked. "No, he can't," said Gray, who was standing nearby. Gray wasn't *just* trying to disrespect Stoudamire; he was only being honest. The junior guard scored 13 of his game-high 21 points in the second half to help the top-ranked Demon Deacons erase a 12-point deficit and beat the Wildcats 63–60.

Gray's performance earned him tournament MVP honors and was especially impressive considering he played with five stitches below his right eyebrow, the result of a gash he sustained when he was elbowed during the first half of Wake's 79–67 semifinal win over Providence two nights earlier. After getting sewn up in the locker room, Gray, who wore a mask for eight games after he broke his jaw during his freshman season, returned to score all 21 of his points against the Friars. Though he woke up the next two mornings with his eye swollen shut—"I looked like I had gone 12 rounds with Oscar De La Hoya," he said—Gray refused to sit out practice on Thursday and Friday. He then had to leave the Arizona game briefly in the first half when he got kicked above the same eye during a scramble for a loose ball. "If you're not going to be the best player out there, you have to try to be the toughest," Gray says.

UNSTOPPABLE Gray overcame an injury to score 21 points in a semifinal win over Providence.

Given the preseason hype surrounding Demon Deacons sophomore point guard Chris Paul, it's easy to forget that Gray was voted first team All-ACC last season after averaging 17.0 points. (Paul was third team.) Gray, however, is used to being overshadowed. During his senior year at prep powerhouse Oak Hill Academy in Mouth of Wilson, Va., he played alongside several coveted players, including Carmelo Anthony. But Gray didn't have to lead his team in scoring to impress Wake coach Skip Prosser. "The courage Justin displays is contagious," Prosser says. "[He] can will his teammates to wins."

Gray, who is from Charlotte, is close to Paul on and off the court. The two live together, go to church together and spend time at their family homes. "My mom calls him 'Yum-yum, eat 'em up,' because every time he's over at my house, he's in the fridge," says Paul, who grew up in Lewisville, N.C., about 13 miles from Wake's campus. Last summer their families went on a cruise to the Bahamas, and they were starters on the U.S. team that won a gold medal at the World Championship for Young Men qualifying tournament in Canada.

The only time things get testy between Gray and Paul is when they're on opposite teams in pickup games—they almost came to blows during one scrimmage this fall—but that competitiveness makes them formidable when they're on the same side. "We're all about winning," Gray says. "And it's not just me and Chris, it's our whole team. We don't care who gets the credit."

Even so, it's time Gray started getting his share. □

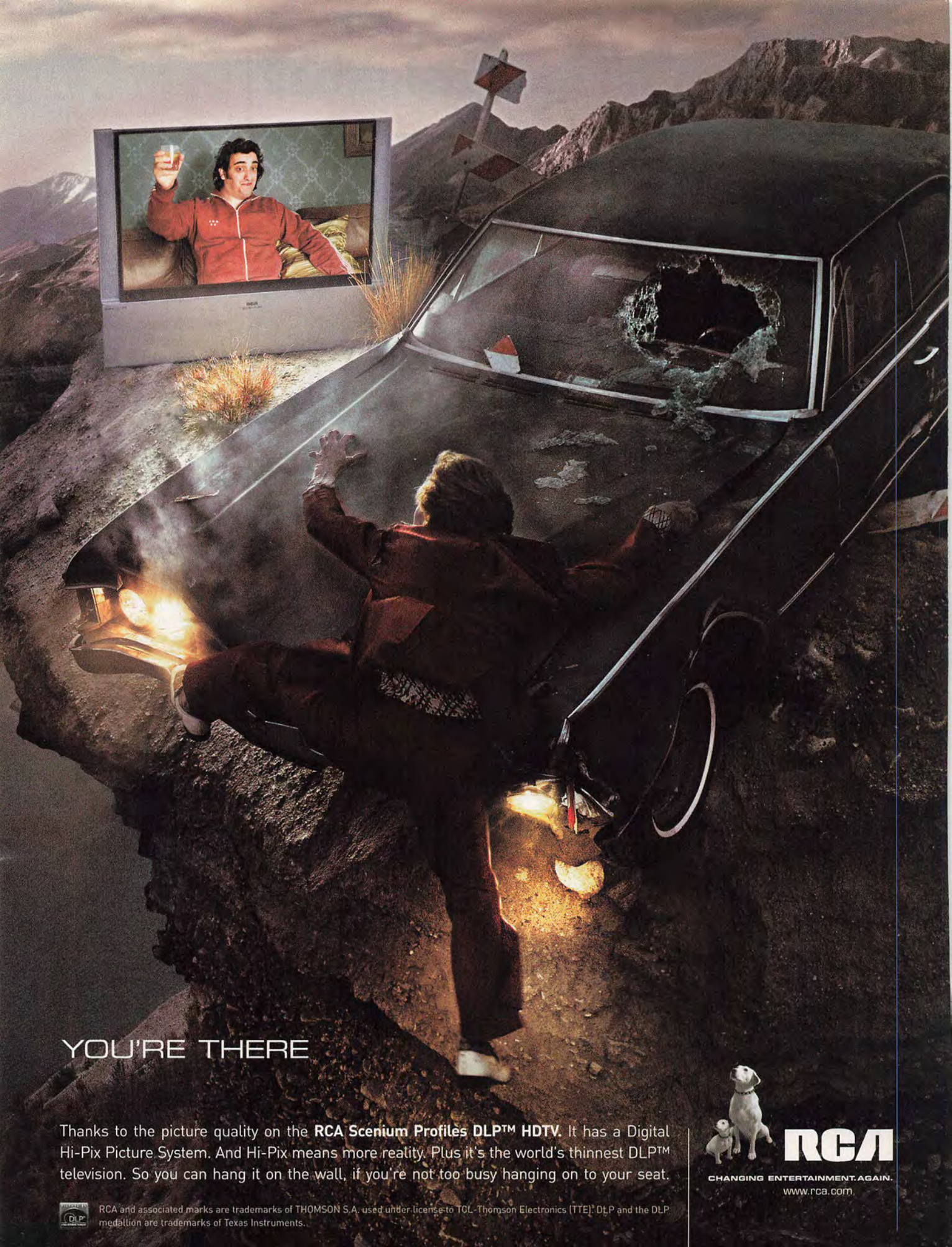
MANNY MILLAN

Three Pointer

1 Washington is more than just **Nate Robinson**. The dynamic 5′ 9″ junior point guard is one of six players averaging at least eight points for the 5–0 Huskies, who defeated Utah, Oklahoma and Alabama last week to win the Great Alaska Shootout.

2 Providence guard **Dwight Brewington** is one of the nation's most improved players. Through six games, the Friars' leading scorer was not their star, **Ryan Gomes**, but Brewington, a sophomore averaging 18.5 points. That's up from 5.7 last season.

3 Missouri is taking hits on and off the court. In addition to dropping three straight (Davidson, Creighton and Houston), the Tigers had to change the name of their new arena last week—from Paige Sports Arena to Mizzou Arena—after 22-year-old Wal-Mart heiress **Paige Laurie** was accused of cheating when she was a student at USC.



Thanks to the picture quality on the **RCA Scenium Profiles DLP™ HDTV.** It has a Digital Hi-Pix Picture System. And Hi-Pix means more reality. Plus it's the world's thinnest DLP™ television. So you can hang it on the wall, if you're not too busy hanging on to your seat.

RCA

CHANGING ENTERTAINMENT. AGAIN.
www.rca.com

RCA and associated marks are trademarks of THOMSON S.A. used under license to TCL-Thomson Electronics (TTE). DLP and the DLP medallion are trademarks of Texas Instruments.

by Mark Beech

TRYING TIMES After four losing seasons in five years, Paterno is holding off unhappy fans—as are his colleagues at (inset, from top) Clemson, Syracuse and Missouri.

The Hot Seat

Eleven coaches have stepped down or been fired in the last month. How many more will follow—and who will they be?

IT'S A testament to the vagaries of coaching that someone as venerable as Penn State's Joe Paterno—after 39 years and 343 victories—could find himself fighting to save his job. Since Florida fired Ron Zook in October, in the wake of a 38–31 loss at Mississippi State, 10 other Division I-A coaches have stepped down or been axed, and numerous others, including Paterno, have heard calls for them to leave. Here are the coaches in each major conference whose jobs are in the greatest jeopardy.

ACC

Tommy Bowden, *Clemson*
In six years he's 44–29 with five bowl appearances, but Tigers fans are growing impatient. They expected a breakthrough after a 9–4 season in 2003, but this year's team finished 6–5. Junior quarterback Charlie Whitehurst went from being a sleeper Heisman candidate to one of the nation's least accurate passers, and in November—a week after upsetting Miami—Clemson hit a low point by losing to woeful Duke. Bowden will be back on the sideline next fall, thanks to the three-year contract extension he signed last February, but he has to win to keep his job.

BIG EAST

Paul Pasqualoni, *Syracuse*
Could he lead the Orange to a BCS bowl game and still be canned? Last Saturday's 43–17 upset of No. 17 Boston College, which gave Syracuse a share of the conference title and could bring the Orange a berth in the Fiesta Bowl if Pittsburgh loses to South Florida on Dec. 4, may not be enough to erase the stink of another mediocre (6–5) season. The victory at BC, after all, was Syracuse's first Big East road win in its last 11 tries. Pasqualoni is 107-58-1 in 14 seasons but 16–19 in his last three. His fate was probably sealed by two humiliating losses this fall: 51–0 to Purdue on Sept. 5 and 34–24 to Temple on Nov. 13.

BIG TEN

Joe Paterno, *Penn State*
With the firing of Illinois coach Ron Turner last week, Paterno, who turns 78 in three weeks, is now sitting on the hottest seat in the Big Ten. The Nittany Lions finished 4–7 (2–6 in the conference) and the offense was the ugliest Paterno has fielded, ranking 103rd in the nation in total offense at week's end. Insisting he's not ready to step down, Paterno has assured fans that next year's team will be special. Last month he showed he still has at least some of his old magic when the nation's No. 1 high school cornerback, Justin King of Monroeville, Pa., announced his intention to sign with Penn State.

BIG 12

Gary Pinkel, *Missouri*
Like Bowden, Pinkel failed to produce a breakout season in

Three and Out

1 Why on earth do we need **28 bowl games**? A rash of upsets, coupled with South Carolina's and Clemson's self-imposed bans, means there could be exactly 56 eligible teams once the dust settles. As a result, you could be watching the likes of Troy this bowl season.

2 After struggling out of the gate, last year's co-national champ **LSU** has won six straight games to secure a New Year's Day bowl berth in what amounted to a rebuilding year for Nick Saban.

3 The ACC's BCS representative will be one of its two newest additions, **Miami** or **Virginia Tech**, whichever wins on Saturday. Ironically, the Hokies were a last-minute invite in 2003 and were one of the schools that filed suit against the conference. —*Stewart Mandel*

ROBERT CAPLIN (PATERNO); PRESTON MACK/U.S. PRESSWIRE (BOWDEN); DAMIAN STROHMEYER (PASQUALONI); DAVE MARTIN/AP (PINKEL)

Introducing Gillette's Best Blades Ever.

New PowerGlide™ Blades

Gillette's most advanced blades have a patented coating for our smoothest blade surface ever. For the best shave, try Gillette's best blades.

www.MACH3.com

Gillette®

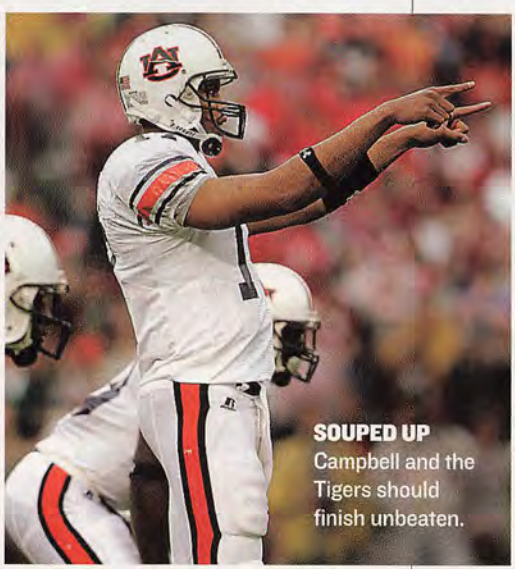
The Best a Man Can Get™

© 2004 The Gillette Company

2004. The Tigers were expected to contend for the Big 12 North title, and junior quarterback Brad Smith was touted as a Heisman candidate. But this year's 5–6 record, which included losses to Troy and Kansas, made Missouri one of the nation's biggest disappointments (along with Smith, who ranked 82nd in passing efficiency). Working in Pinkel's favor is that after inheriting a moribund program in 2001, he improved the Tigers' record in each of the next three seasons.

PAC-10

Karl Dorrell, *UCLA*
With the firing of Stanford's Buddy Teevens on Monday, Dorrell became the Pac-10 coach on the shakiest footing. The Bruins are 12–11 (6–4 this season) under Dorrell heading into Saturday's game against their crosstown rival, No. 1–ranked USC, whose success over the last two seasons has put additional pressure on Dorrell to jump-start UCLA's program. A big problem has been the play of quarterback Drew Olson, who has been inconsistent and thrown 11 interceptions.



SOUPED UP Campbell and the Tigers should finish unbeaten.

SEC

Rich Brooks, *Kentucky*
Though he has received a vote of confidence from athletic director Mitch Barnhart, Brooks has to start producing. When Brooks replaced the popular Guy Morriss in December 2002, the Wildcats were coming off a 7–5 season. Under Brooks, Kentucky finished 4–8 last year and 2–9 this fall, with a squad that ranked 115th in total offense at week's end. Even worse, Brooks has won only two games in the SEC in the last two years. How was Ron Zook fired before this guy?

GAMES TO WATCH

Showdown Saturday

Conference championships and plain ol' pride will be on the line this week in what should be an intriguing set of matchups. Here's a look at Saturday's biggest games.

Virginia Tech (9–2) at Miami (8–2) The ACC title comes down to two squads defined by their opportunistic defenses and special teams. The Hurricanes are third in the country in turnover margin (1.4); the Hokies are tied for eighth (1.2). Miami's Devin Hester has returned three punts for touchdowns this fall; Tech defensive tackle Jim Davis has blocked three kicks.

Pittsburgh (7–3) at South Florida (4–6) The Panthers can lock up an automatic BCS berth with a victory over the Bulls. The key for Pitt will be shutting down running back Andre Hall, who has rushed for 1,272 yards and 11 touchdowns this season.

Colorado (7–4) vs. Oklahoma (11–0) Few people expect the Buffaloes to win the Big 12 championship game, but Colorado quarterback Joel Klatt might be able to throw a scare into the Sooners if he can stretch the defense with the long pass.

Auburn (11–0) vs. Tennessee (9–2) The Vols lost 34–10 to the Tigers earlier this season and have struggled lately, barely getting past woeful Vanderbilt and Kentucky in the past two weeks. But Tennessee's offense is dangerous, even without freshman quarterback Erik Ainge, who's recovering from a separated right shoulder. For the Vols to win this SEC title game, the defensive line will have to find a way to put pressure on Auburn quarterback Jason Campbell, who was sacked only once and completed 16 of 23 passes for 252 yards and two touchdowns in the earlier matchup.

Army (2–8) vs. Navy (8–2) Though the Cadets don't have much to show for it, they are much better than a year ago, when they went 0–13. Still, the Midshipmen and their rushing offense—which ranks third nationally—are the clear favorites, especially against an Army run defense that ranks 115th. □

JOELLE WIGGINS

Introducing Gillette® M3 POWER™

A MACH3® INNOVATION™

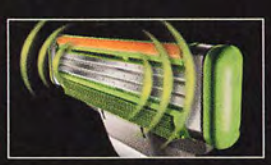
© 2005 The Gillette Company

FEEL THE POWER OF THE WORLD'S BEST SHAVE.

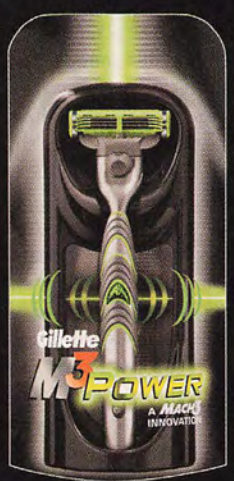
The First Battery-Powered Shaving System From Gillette.

Turn on the battery-powered motor.

Micro-pulses raise the hair from your skin.



So the PowerGlide™ blades can shave closer.



Gillette®

The Best a Man Can Get™

www.MACH3.com

Inside Motor Sports

by Lars Anderson

VICTORY RUSH The points runner-up, Johnson took first in four of the 10 Chase races.

Eight's Enough

Despite a tragedy that rocked his team, Jimmie Johnson roared to the most Cup wins and is SI's Driver of the Year

AS JIMMIE JOHNSON walked away from his number 48 Chevrolet after NASCAR's season-ending Ford 400 at Homestead-Miami Speedway on Nov. 21, he wore the glum look of a man whose spirit had just been snapped in two. Moments earlier he had charged to a second-place finish, yet it had not been enough to overtake Kurt Busch (who placed fifth in the race) in the Nextel Cup points standings. Johnson lost the championship to Busch by eight points—the closest finish in NASCAR's 55-year history. But don't be swayed by the outcome of the 10-race Chase for the Championship: Over the course of the 36-race season Johnson was NASCAR's most dominant force, and that's why he's SI's Driver of the Year.

"It has been a great ride," says Johnson, who began the Chase second in the standings and wound up 2004 with a NASCAR-high eight wins and 20 top five finishes. "But it's hard to think too much about it because of what happened with the airplane."

On Oct. 24 a 10-seat turboprop owned by Hendrick Motorsports—the team for which Johnson and Jeff Gordon drive—crashed into fog-shrouded Bull Mountain in southeastern Virginia. All 10 passengers, who were on their way to the Subway 500 at Martinsville Speedway, were killed. The crash was particularly devastating for team owner Rick Hendrick, who lost his only son, Ricky; his brother, John; two of his nieces, Jennifer and Kimberly Hendrick; and his best friend, Randy Dorton, who was the team's chief engine builder. When Johnson was told about the accident moments after winning the Subway 500, he appeared disoriented and overwhelmed by the shock.

Yet in the guttiest performance of the season, the 29-year-old Johnson came back the following week to win the Bass Pro Shops MBNA 500 in Atlanta. While still strapped into his Lowe's Chevy in Victory Lane, he was handed a cellphone. On the other end was Rick Hendrick. "Hey, boss," Johnson said with teary eyes.

"Put your hat on backward for Little Ricky," Hendrick said, referring to the way his son wore his cap. Johnson turned his hat around, then broke down.

Despite his grief Johnson took the checkered flag two weeks later at Darlington, becoming the first driver since Gordon, in 1998–99, to have four wins in five starts. Had Johnson not suffered freakish back-to-back 37th- and 32nd-place finishes early in the Chase (an overheated engine and an accident, respectively), he almost certainly would have roared to the title. "Jimmie had an amazing year," says Busch. "It's incredible that he was able to keep his focus even after the tragedy. He's just a great race car driver."

That much is certain. And given that Johnson, who just finished his third full season on the Cup circuit, has yet to reach his full potential, he figures to be a contender for the next decade. "Jimmie is going to win a championship one of these days," says Gordon. "I don't know when, but I'd bet it will be sooner rather than later."

So would we. □

Showdown of the Year

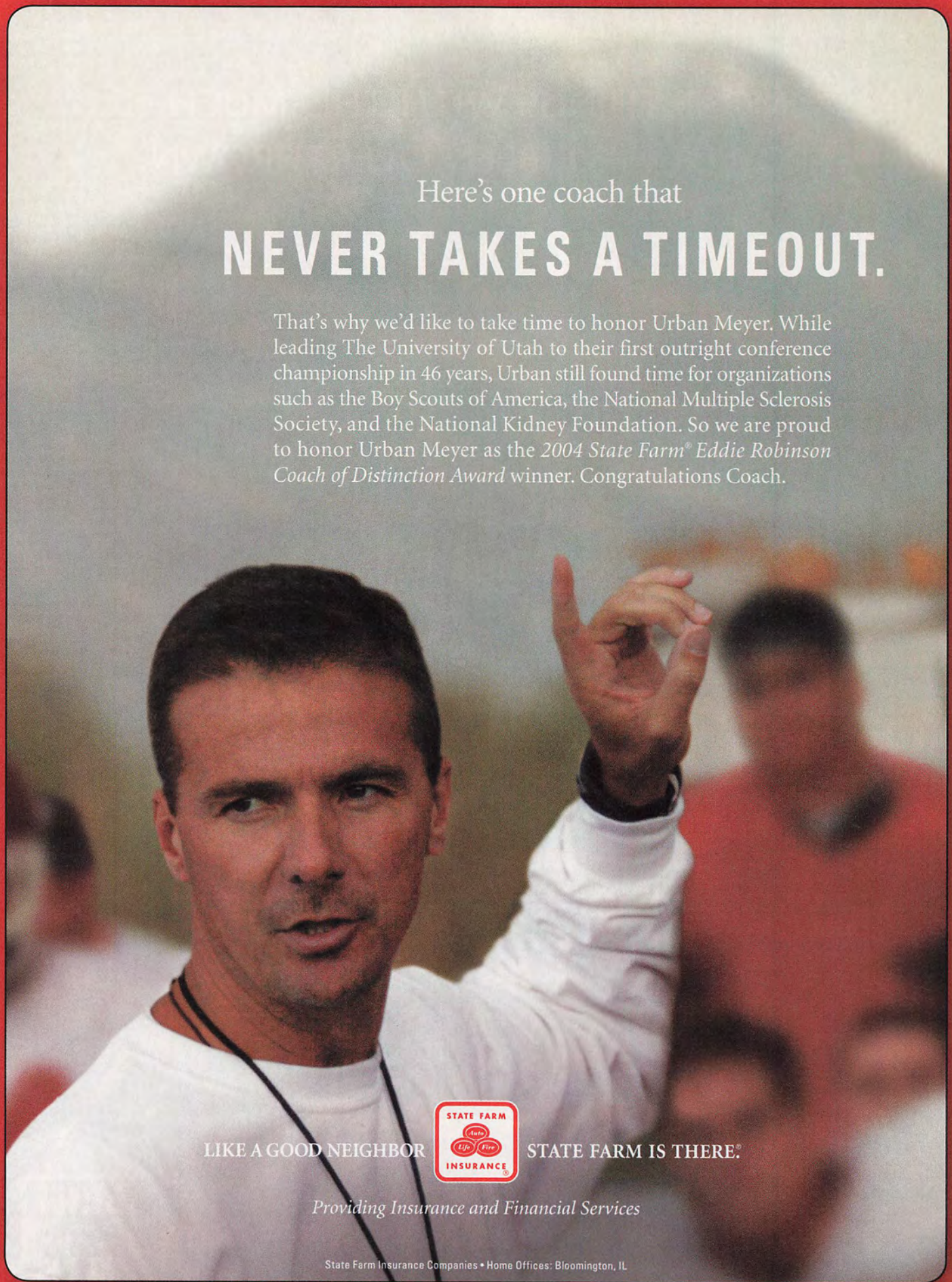
Microphone in hand, **Jeff Gordon** stood on a deck outside the Marriott in South Beach on Nov. 19 and threw down the gauntlet. "I can't wait to get to Paris," Gordon told the crowd of 100 fans, "and show **Michael Schumacher** what NASCAR racing is all about!"

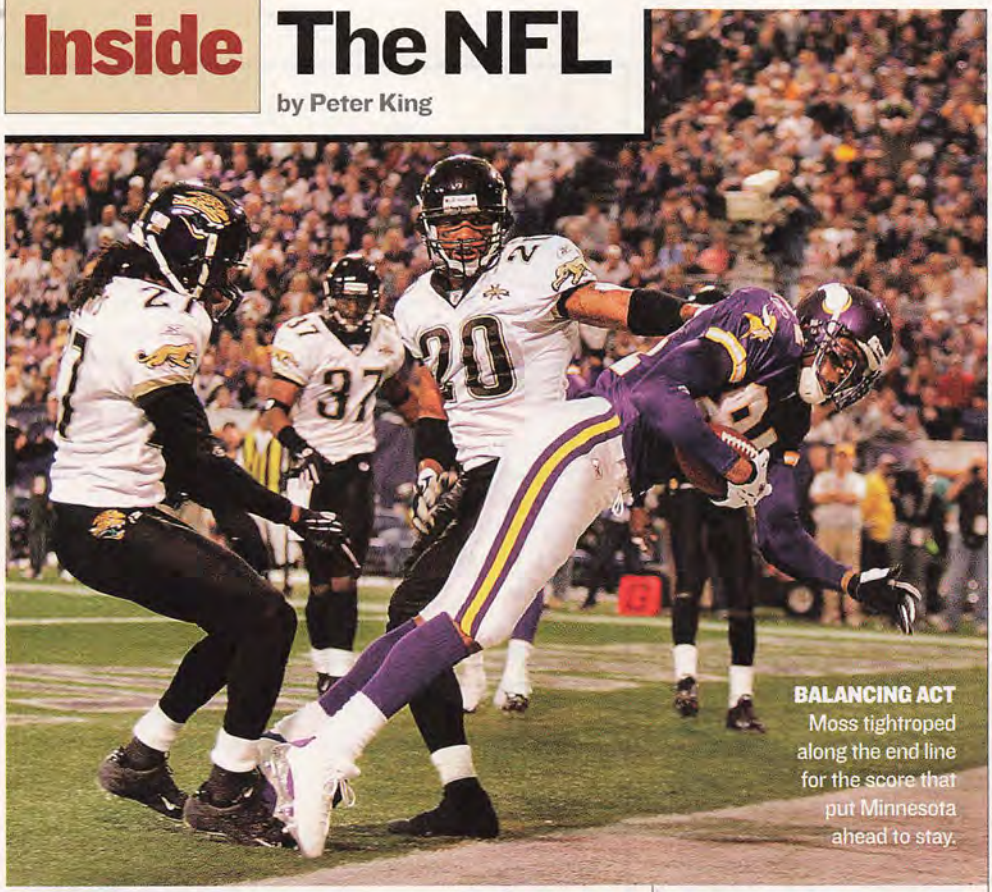
On Saturday, Gordon and **Jimmie Johnson** will represent the U.S. in the 17th annual Race of Champions–Nations Cup in Paris. Seven other countries—including Germany, whose two-man team will feature überdriver Schumacher *(right)*, the seven-time Formula One champion—will be represented at Stade de France, an indoor soccer arena that seats 80,000. The 16 drivers will face off in a series of match races in identically equipped and prepared four-wheel-drive rally cars on a specially constructed one-kilometer asphalt figure-eight track. The winner will be crowned Champion of Champions, after which the two-driver squads will vie for the title of World's Fastest Nation.

If the racing goes to form, fans will be treated to a dream matchup: Gordon, NASCAR's four-time champ, versus Schumacher, the most successful driver in F/1 history. "Win or lose," says Gordon, "it's probably the only opportunity I'll ever have to race against Schumacher." —L.A.

AL MESSERSCHMIDT/WIREIMAGE.COM (JOHNSON); ROBERT BECK (CAR); GILLES LEVENT/DPPI/ICON SMI

MOST THINGS WITH THIS MUCH POWER HAVE BEEN OVERTHROWN.
6.0-liter Power Stroke® Turbo Diesel. Variable response. Improved. More powerful. Unsurpassed 325 horsepower. 570 lb.-ft. of torque. For the most pulling power. Longest lasting diesel.* All hail the king. Fordvehicles.com.
Ford
THE NEXT SUPER DUTY
BUILT Ford TOUGH
*Based on vehicles in operation '94-CYTD 6/04.


Here's one coach that
NEVER TAKES A TIMEOUT.
That's why we'd like to take time to honor Urban Meyer. While leading The University of Utah to their first outright conference championship in 46 years, Urban still found time for organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, and the National Kidney Foundation. So we are proud to honor Urban Meyer as the *2004 State Farm® Eddie Robinson Coach of Distinction Award* winner. Congratulations Coach.
LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR
STATE FARM
Auto
Life
Fire
INSURANCE
STATE FARM IS THERE.®
Providing Insurance and Financial Services
State Farm Insurance Companies • Home Offices: Bloomington, IL



BALANCING ACT Moss tightroped along the end line for the score that put Minnesota ahead to stay.

JOHN BIEVER

Moss Appeal

The Vikings' hopes of winning the NFC North hinge on whether game-breaker Randy Moss can stay healthy

AFTER A stressful four days of practice, Vikings wideout Randy Moss and his bum right hamstring took last Friday off. In his place wideout Nate Burleson ran one of Moss's signature routes—a drag pattern across the back of the end zone. Quarterback Daunte Culpepper threw the ball high, and it glanced off the fingertips of a leaping Burleson. From the sideline Moss screamed, "That's right where I want it Sunday! Real high!"

A light moment in a tune-up practice? Not to Moss and Culpepper. Both men knew the heavy-legged Moss, six weeks removed from a third-degree hamstring strain and at perhaps 80% readiness for Sunday's game with the Jaguars, would be back in the lineup. They also knew there'd be a time in the game when they'd try to connect on their favorite play.

That time came with 5:38 left in the third quarter at the Metrodome, with the score tied at 13 and the Vikings facing third-and-goal at the Jacksonville two. Moss lined up wide right in a four-receiver set, covered by cornerback Rashean Mathis. At the snap Moss took a couple of steps straight-ahead, deked each way, then moved from right to left across the back of the end zone. Mathis was in close pursuit, and strong safety Donovin Darius floated over to help. Despite the double coverage Culpepper lasered the ball to the end line. Darius put up both arms, trying to deflect it, and Moss's hands shot up behind Darius. He gloved the ball high, then tightroped along the end line.

It was a daring throw and a remarkable catch. Surely other receivers were more open than the sandwiched Moss. "I'm sure they were," Culpepper said after the Vikings' 27–16 win. "But that's our play. I have total faith in him. We practice it 10 times a week. We call it picking peanuts off the DB's head. That's what he did."

Moss just shrugged. "It was designed to go to me," he said, "so even if the coverage is good, we know we can make the play."

Because he makes such plays, Moss is vital to the Vikings as they battle the Packers for the NFC North lead. Minnesota players and coaches have talked about being able to play at the top of their game without Moss. The numbers suggest otherwise. In the six games that Moss has started or played in extensively, the Vikings are 5–1 and averaging 29.5 points per game. In the three games he has missed plus two others in which he appeared in a total of nine plays, they are 2–3 and averaging 6.7 fewer points per game.

Last week trainers told coach Mike Tice that Moss would be fit to practice hard and play as much as he could handle against the Jaguars. On Sunday, Moss was on the field for 51 of 61 snaps and caught four passes for 40 yards. "You're not going to get a third-degree hamstring injury totally healed till the offseason," Tice said in his office on Sunday evening. "All along we were told it was an eight-week injury, which would mean he'd be close to normal against Seattle [on Dec. 12]. He was sluggish today because he has training-camp legs. He hadn't done anything for so long. He's got to build endurance in the muscle."

As Moss went through elaborate stretching exercises at his locker after the game, he said the words that Vikings fans have been waiting to hear, "Don't worry. I'll be back. I'll be 100." Well, even at 80%, he made the game-winning snag in a meeting between playoff contenders. That's what great players do.

COLTS' PASSING GAME

Wideouts Also On Record Pace

Peyton Manning isn't playing favorites as he continues his assault on Dan Marino's NFL record for touchdown passes in a season. In the wake of Manning's six-TD afternoon in a 41–9 pasting of the Lions on Thanksgiving Day, Indianapolis wideouts Marvin Harrison, Reggie Wayne and Brandon Stokley are on pace to have the best season for a trio of receivers in league history. Only three times have three teammates surpassed 1,000 receiving yards in the same season: most recently Bert Emanuel, Terance Mathis and Eric Metcalf of the 1995 Falcons. And never has a team had

three players with at least 10 touchdown receptions the same year. The Colts' trio is on pace to do both.

"One of the strengths of the three guys," coach Tony Dungy said last Friday, "is each one enters every game thinking, Today's going to be [my] day. They may get a little frustrated when it isn't, but we're going to have about 25 completions in an average game. We've got six really good receivers, so the math isn't going to work for each of them each week. In Detroit, Marvin had 12 [catches], Reggie had three. They're professional enough to know it'll probably be different next week."

"Marvin makes it all go," says Vikings safety Corey Chavous, who chased the Colts' wideouts during a 31–28 loss to Indianapolis on Nov. 8. "He's so precise, and he's so hard to cover. Reggie's more physical than he looks, and Stokley just gets open."

BUSY MAN Harrison was the Colts' go-to guy against Detroit, catching 12 balls, three for TDs.

Manning, who with 41 touchdown passes—and five games left—is on pace to shatter Marino's record of 48, truly is an equal-opportunity thrower. Harrison has 11 touchdowns and 764 yards, Wayne nine and 779, Stokley eight and 729. They're bolstered by three more receiving threats: tight ends Dallas Clark and Marcus Pollard and running back Edgerrin James, who might actually be the key to the attack. "So many of our touchdown passes have come on play-action," Dungy says. "That works wonders when you've got a runner teams respect as much as they do Edgerrin."

VP PIOLI STAYING PUT

Pats' Blueprint For Success

Ego, money and grass-is-greener opportunity all cause great teams to dissolve in this salary-cap era. Coach Jimmy Johnson and owner Jerry Jones couldn't coexist in Dallas. The plug was pulled on the coach–G.M. powerhouse of Mike Holmgren–Ron Wolf in Green Bay when the Seahawks offered Holmgren total control of their football operations. Free agents exited Tampa for big money after the Bucs won the Super Bowl.

The Patriots are one team that has created what we all thought was an outdated concept—esprit de corps—and proved that top-to-bottom franchise stability sustains team success. One more example of that came on Sunday, when Scott Pioli, the club's 39-year-old vice president of player personnel, said he would stay with the team at least through the end of his contract, which expires after the 2006 draft. NFL rules stipulate that Pioli could have left for a position that gave him control of a team's football operations, and there were indications that Cleveland was interested in giving the former Browns scout just that.

"I entered into an agreement 2½ years ago that I plan to fulfill," says Pioli. "There's a sense of wanting to finish something we started. I understand this is a business, but if you don't have an emotional attachment to the people you work with, you're in it for the wrong reasons."

Over the past two years at least seven veteran stalwarts—linebacker Tedy Bruschi and tackle Matt Light among them—have taken less money to stay or sign with New England than would have been on the table elsewhere. And last winter, secondary coach Eric Mangini turned down the

King's Corner

HOT TOPIC

Brett Favre needs 53 touchdown passes to break Dan Marino's NFL career record of 420, but if the Packers' quarterback sets the mark it won't be his favorite. Favre *(left)* is most proud of his streak of consecutive starts, which reached 200 on Monday night against the Rams. Favre hasn't missed a start since Sept. 27, 1992 and the streak is 84 games longer than any other quarterback's in history. "I'm certain it will mean more than anything else," he says. "Every week I say, 'I can't believe I made another game.' Guys are falling all around me, guys in great shape. Even I have to admit I'm fortunate."

BY THE NUMBERS

So you think turnover margin is overrated? The top four teams in that department (the Colts, Steelers, Eagles and Jets) have a combined record of 36–8. The bottom four teams in turnover margin (the Cowboys, Dolphins, 49ers and Raiders) are a combined 10–34.

MATCHUP OF THE WEEK

Green Bay at Philadelphia. Last June vacationing Eagles wide receiver **Freddie Mitchell** was at a restaurant in Stockholm when a Swede approached his table and stared at him. "I know you," Mitchell recalls the man saying. "I saw the play!" Last January, Mitchell *(right)* caught the pivotal pass in an NFC divisional playoff game against the Packers, a 28-yard completion from **Donovan McNabb** on fourth-and-26 with a minute left in regulation that helped set up the tying field in Philadelphia's 20–17 overtime win. Green Bay has lost six straight in Philly, its last win, 49–0, coming in 1962.

THREE POINTS

1. I never thought my vote for Coach of the Year would go to a man who's walking the sideline for the defending Super Bowl champions, but I'm leaning toward **Bill Belichick**. The Patriots went 4–0 in November with road wins over the Rams and the Chiefs—two of the top five passing teams in the NFL—despite using a wide receiver, **Troy Brown**, to play more at cornerback than injured starters **Ty Law** and **Tyrone Poole**.
2. Memo to Lions president **Matt Millen**: Sign Bucs quarterback **Brad Johnson** *(above)* if he becomes available in the off-season. Detroit will need a proven replacement for **Joey Harrington** if the third-year passer continues to screw up, and it's unclear whether backup **Mike McMahon** could handle the job.
3. I think the Cardinals' **Dennis Green** is a heck of a coach. But rookie **John Navarre** at quarterback? Denny, swallow your pride and go back to **Josh McCown**. You're killing the poor kid—and hurting your playoff chances too.

Peter King's Monday Morning Quarterback, every week at **SI.com/football**.

PETER READ MILLER (HARRISON); DARREN HAUCK/WIREIMAGE.COM (FAVRE); HUNTER MARTIN/WIREIMAGE.COM (MITCHELL); REINHOLD MATAY/WIREIMAGE.COM (JOHNSON)

AUNT IDA'S FRUITCAKE—
HARD.

CLICK-N-SHIP—
EASY.

Nothing helps make the holidays easier than Click-N-Ship® online shipping. Just go online, where you can pay postage, print labels and your carrier will pick up your packages for you. To get started, visit usps.com/clicknship. It's just one more way the U.S. Postal Service® is working for you.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®

©2004 United States Postal Service. Eagle symbol is a registered trademark of the United States Postal Service.

usps.com

Raiders' defensive coordinator job (and a huge pay increase) to stay. It's no secret why the Patriots are 50–15, including a pair of Super Bowl wins, since the start of the 2001 season.

DISPATCHES

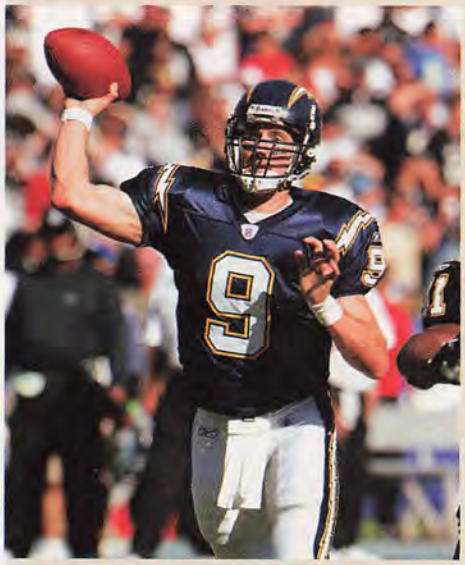
Osgood's Very Special Play

The Chargers moved to 8–3 on Sunday largely because of backup wideout Kassim Osgood's terrific hustle on the second-half kickoff in Kansas City. The Chiefs' Dante Hall was headed for an apparent touchdown, but Osgood chased the return man for about 70 yards and finally closed in on him. Looking over his shoulder at Osgood, Hall fumbled at the San Diego 15. Instead of falling behind 24–14, the Chargers still trailed 17–14 and had the ball back. "Kassim Osgood made as fine a play as I've seen in my entire career in football," said San Diego coach Marty Schottenheimer. The Chargers rallied to win 34–31. . . . The Bengals used a first-round pick in last April's draft to select Michigan running back Chris Perry, but in fourth-year veteran Rudi Johnson they have a self-effacing, durable back who's rushed for 2,006 yards over his last 24 games. In a 58–48 win over the Browns on Sunday, Johnson carried 26 times for 202 yards and two scores. Perry has carried the ball twice all season for a team that had other needs on draft day. . . . They are 9–2 and closing in on the NFC South title, but the third quarter continues to be a problem for the Falcons. On Sunday, the Saints controlled the ball for 11:13 of the third quarter and closed a 17–6 halftime deficit to three points. The Falcons needed a 20-yard touchdown pass from Michael Vick to tight end Alge Crumpler with 1:22 left to pull out a 24–21 win. For the season Atlanta has been outscored 48–14 in the third period and the opposition has controlled the ball 65% of the time. □

Dr. Z's Forecast

David Binn remembers. Who is David Binn? He's the San Diego long snapper and the only Charger who remembers the last time the team was any good.

In 1994, Binn's rookie year, the Chargers went to the Super Bowl. The following season they reached the playoffs as a wild card. Then the darkness descended: eight years without a winning record, five seasons finishing last or tied for last in the AFC West, the great Ryan Leaf mistake, heroic defenses led by Junior Seau and Rodney Harrison dragged to their doom by Mickey Mouse offenses. Oh, there are some players on this San Diego squad who went through those terrible times, but only Binn was there when the sun shone.



MISTAKE-FREE The efficient Brees hasn't thrown an interception since Oct. 17.

Now the Chargers stand poised to achieve something that's been denied them for eight years—a winning record. A victory against visiting Denver this Sunday would give San Diego nine wins, not to mention a two-game lead over the Broncos in the division. If the Chargers lose, the two teams will be even at 8–4, but Denver, which won 23–13 in the teams' first meeting on Sept. 26, will have the hammer on them in head-to-head competition.

Broncos coach Mike Shanahan holds a 9–7 lead in his matchups with the Chargers' Marty Schottenheimer, which includes Marty's days as the Chiefs' and Redskins' coach, but this isn't the same Schottenheimer. His operation is more wide open now. The old Martyball is just a quaint historical footnote.

At halftime on Sunday, while Drew Brees was in the process of throwing for a career-high 378 yards and bringing San Diego back to beat the Chiefs on the road, the following conversation took place between Schottenheimer and his offensive coordinator, Cam Cameron. "I said to him, 'We need to throw the ball,' " Schottenheimer recalled. "He said, 'Coach, we are.' I said, 'Good, keep throwing it.' "

Brees, who had spent almost a year in the doghouse, is now the fair-haired boy. And the offense is doing some remarkable things. In winning their last four home games, for instance, the Chargers outscored their opponents by an average of 39–17. Brees has thrown one interception over the last nine games, and he's tied for fewest picks in the NFL this season with four.

Denver has enough weapons to test the San Diego defense, but in its loss to Oakland in the snow on Sunday night the Broncos showed an alarming tendency to give up the long pass. Even more shocking was the fact that the guy who got beaten too many times was Champ Bailey, described in some circles as the league's premier shutdown cornerback, whatever that means. Bailey's the guy who went from Washington to Denver in a trade, to shore up a secondary that intercepted only nine passes last year, an NFL low. Am I building a strong enough case for the Chargers? Good, because **San Diego is my pick.**

Green Bay–Philadelphia is a replay of a divisional playoff last season. Teams usually don't blitz Brett Favre, but Eagles coordinator Jim Johnson would blitz his own mother. And it was the blitz that forced Favre into the terrible looping throw in overtime that set up Philly's winning field goal. Well, I've been wrong about the Eagles all year, so I might as well keep it going. Here goes nothing. Philly blitzes. Favre beats it. **The Pack in an upset.**

One more major upset. The desperate **Jaguars**, seeing their playoff hopes fading, take one from the Steelers, who are fat and coasting. The **Redskins**, with that good defense, will overmatch Eli Manning and the Giants. The Bills finally have their legs under them, and I give them the win in Miami, despite the Dolphins' stirring victory over the 49ers last weekend.

The **Jets** will hang on against Houston. I like the **Bucs** over Atlanta, only because the Falcons should be favored and they're not, which leads me to believe that there's a higher intelligence at work here.

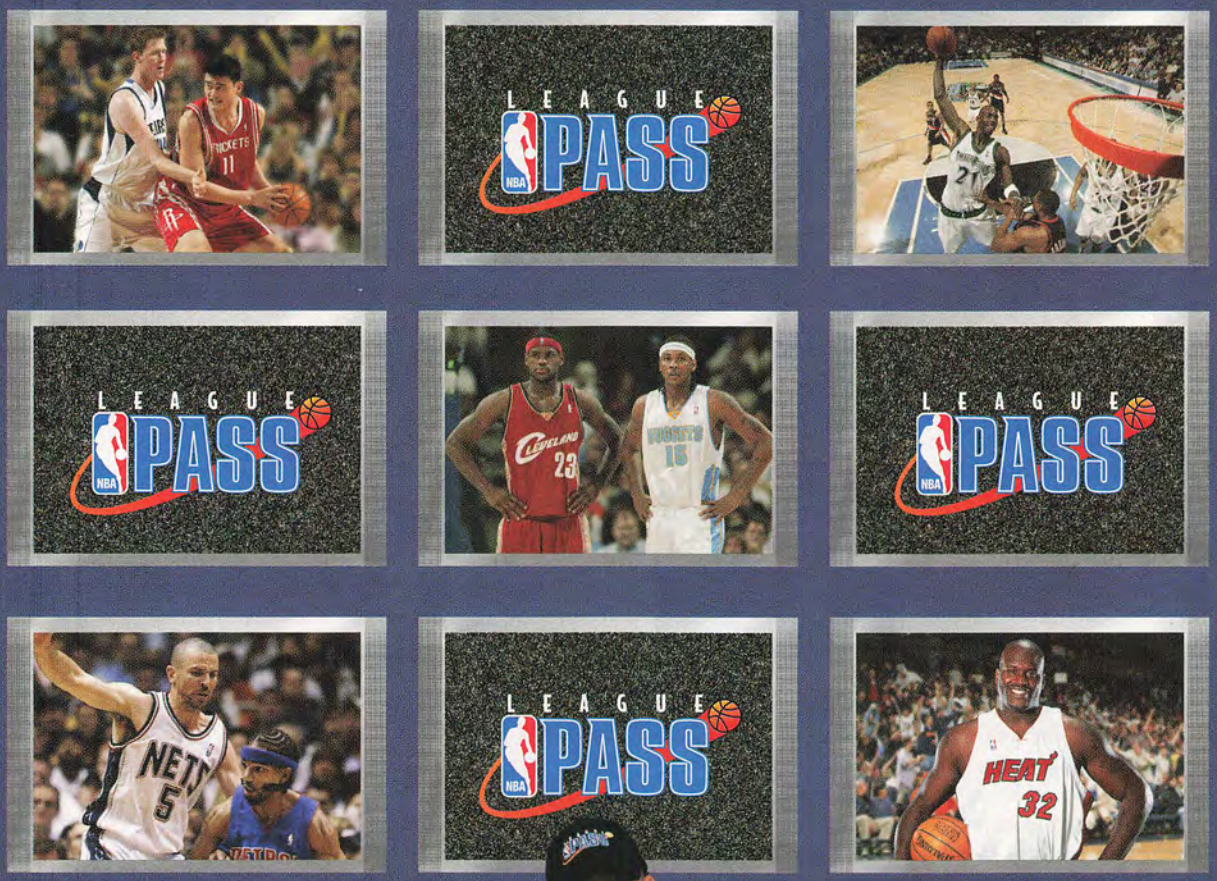
Finally, the Monday-nighter. Seattle, despite getting pummeled unmercifully by the Bills, still hangs on, grimly, to its division lead. I give the **Seahawks** the win over Dallas, but nothing would surprise me in this one. —*Paul Zimmerman*

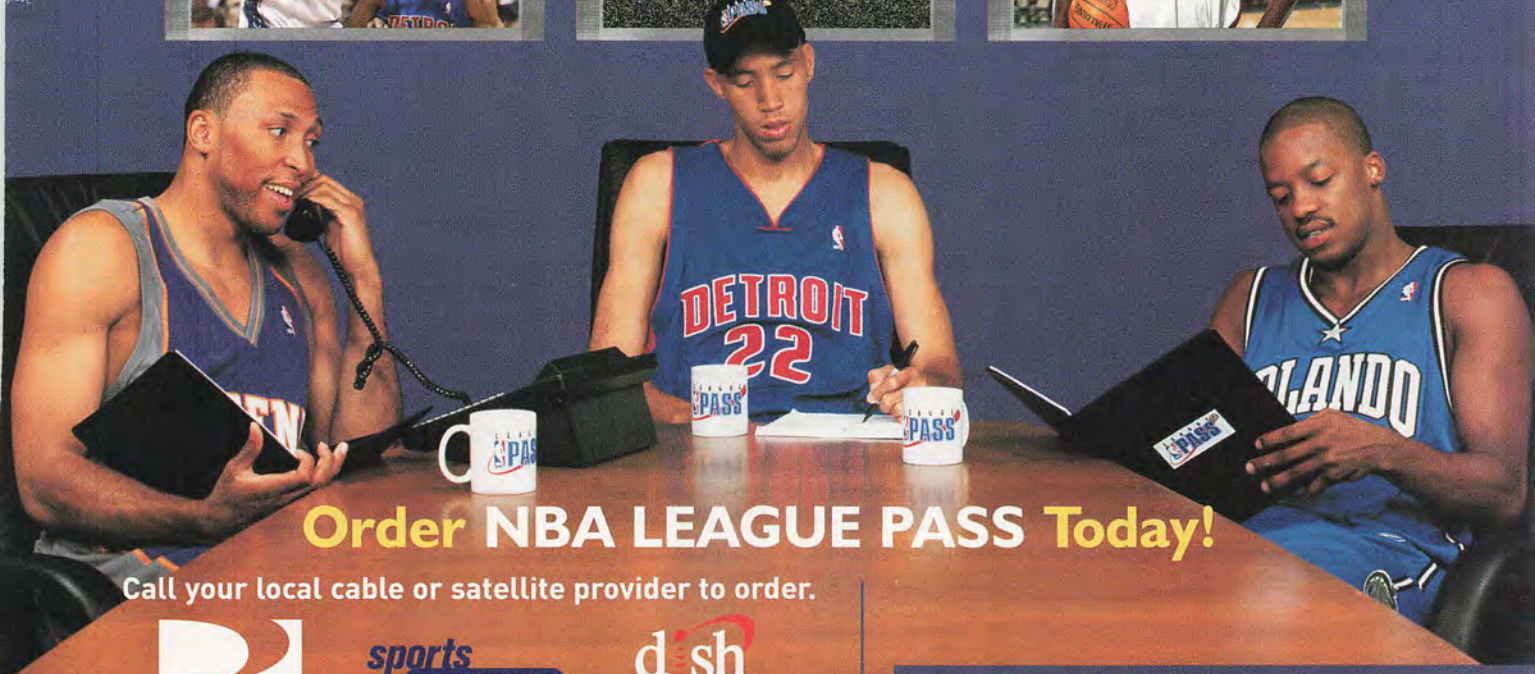
Last week: 6–2 **Season: 63–40**

Dr. Z writes for the Web every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at **SI.com/nfl.**

JOHN W. MCDONOUGH

Working hard so you don't miss a minute of live NBA action... including overtime!





Order NBA LEAGUE PASS Today!

Call your local cable or satellite provider to order.

DIRECTV 1-800-DIRECTV

sports iN DEMAND 888-SPORTS-iN

dish NETWORK 1-800-333-DISH

NBA LEAGUE PASS lets you follow your favorite teams and players all season long.

For more information log on to NBA.com

Games broadcast on NBA LEAGUE PASS are out-of-market. Blackout restrictions apply. NBA LEAGUE PASS automatically continues at a special renewal rate each year, provided DISH Network and DIRECTV carries this service, unless customer calls to cancel prior to the start of the season. May not be available in all areas. Programming subject to change. © 2004 DIRECTV, Inc. DIRECTV and the Cyclone Design logo are registered trademarks of DIRECTV, Inc. Significant restrictions apply to DISH Network hardware and programming availability, and for all offers. © 2004 EchoStar Satellite L.L.C. All rights reserved. © 2004 iN DEMAND L.L.C. All Rights Reserved. iN DEMAND is a service mark of iN DEMAND L.L.C. NBA, the NBA logo and team identifications are the exclusive intellectual property of NBA Properties, Inc. and the respective member teams. © 2004 NBA Properties, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Buckner Got My Vote

by Rick Reilly

SO THE Sportsmen of the Year are the 2004 Boston Red Sox? Big freakin' beans. You want to know who deserves the Sportsman urn more?

Bill Buckner, that's who.

Bill Buckner, for never having taken out a Boston columnist with a hunting rifle. Bill Buckner, for not having choked one of the thousands of drunk accountants from Providence who've come up to him over these last 18 horrible years and said, "Gotta get that glove down, Billy Buck!"

Bill Buckner, for not having holed up in a Tuff Shed in East Nowhere, Mont., and started a letter-bomb delivery service.

Oh, *now* you want to make nice? Now you want to carry around your WE FORGIVE BILL BUCKNER banner at the Sox' sweep of St. Louis? The Red Sox even wanted to bring Buckner back to Boston for the victory parade—"to give him his moment of glory," according to their spokesman.

You know what Bill Buckner says to all of that? *Forgive what?*

"My first reaction to that sign was, That's not very nice," says the perpetually polite 54-year-old Buckner, who is retired and living in Boise. "It *really* bothers me that people think that somehow I lost the World Series."

Buckner doesn't like to talk about it. He doesn't like to think about it. And he doesn't want to be reminded about it. "I'm talking to you," he says, "but that's it. I'll never do another interview on this again. Ever."

You think he sounds bitter? Wouldn't you be?

Wouldn't you be a little torqued off that of the thousands of ground balls you fielded—99.2% successfully—fans only want to talk about that One Ground Ball? Over and over they remind you of One Ground Ball that no-hopped through your legs in the 10th inning of Game 6 of the 1986 World Series, allowing the New York Mets to beat the Red Sox that night and go on to win Game 7?

"You blew the Series!" they decided. They threatened Buckner, cursed him, tormented him. It got so bad that he moved permanently to a ranch in Idaho.

He hunted. He fished. He bought pieces of a few car dealerships. He tried to go on with his life.

But the world wouldn't have it. It wanted to ask about how that One Ground Ball turned his legs into wickets and extended the Curse.

This is a guy who hit .289 lifetime. This is a guy who played 22 seasons. This is a guy who set the alltime record for most assists by a first baseman (184), in 1985.

"We would've got nowhere *near* the World Series without Billy," says his old teammate Oil Can Boyd. "He's had 18 years of hell for *nothin'*."

And lest ye forget: Buckner's Boot wouldn't exist had Red Sox manager John McNamara made his usual late-inning defensive switch, replacing Buckner with the more nimble Dave Stapleton. And Buckner's Boot didn't come until after Sox reliever Calvin Schiraldi had given up three straight singles and McNamara had brought in Bob Stanley to try to get that last out.

Buckner's Boot didn't blow the three-run lead that the Sox had in Game 7, either.

But you'd never know it. Buckner's name went on the list with Typhoid Mary and Mrs. O'Leary's Cow.

Score it E-LIFE. It's the single most unfair thing to happen to an athlete since Vinko Bogataj's fall during a ski jump became "the agony of defeat" for *Wide World of Sports*.

> You want to know who deserves to be Sportsman of the Year even more than the Red Sox? Bill Buckner, that's who.

"I got the raw end of the deal, and I'll always get the raw end of the deal," Buckner says.

Yet somehow he's shown the patience of Hillary Clinton. He's never once gone triple Bobby Knight on anybody. "I've wanted to punch people quite a few times," he says, "but I just figured that'd be more trouble."

In fact Buckner could barely watch the 2004 World Series on TV. "I was trying to watch it with my buddies, but I couldn't even enjoy it," he says. "I kept getting pissed off—them showing that play. I don't think that's what sports should be about. I finally got up and said, 'Forget this.' "

But when the Sox finally won their first title in 86 years, suddenly it was Bill Buckner Amnesty Day. Overnight, Buckner was being remembered for his fine career instead of that One Ground Ball. There was this massive flood of forgiveness that reached him in Idaho: *Won't You Come Home, Bill Buckner?*

And Buckner's basic reply was: *Won't You Go to Hell, Boston, Mass.?*

All is not forgiven. Buckner still has to forgive the fans.

"I'm glad the Sox won and all," he says, "and I hope people will stop bugging me now, but they won't. It never changes."

So let's give the poor man a lifetime Sportsman of the Year award.

He's urned it. □

If you have a comment for Rick Reilly, send it to **reilly@siletters.com**

PETER READ MILLER

The Turbocharged Volkswagen Jetta GLI.® One small victory at a time.

When you put your foot down in the GLI, you'll definitely feel the get up and go. You've got a powerful 180 hp engine and some serious Turbo enhancement under that hood. So when you travel, it's in the victorious left lane. The Jetta GLI. Drive it. You'll get it. To sign up for a test drive, visit driveitgetit.com.

Drivers wanted.®

©2004 Volkswagen.

ABSOLUT RELEASE.

UNLEASH THE RASPBERRY.

ABSOLUT® RASPBERRI. RASPBERRY FLAVORED VODKA. PRODUCT OF SWEDEN. 40% ALC/VOL (80 PROOF). ABSOLUT, ABSOLUT RASPBERRI COUNTRY OF SWEDEN & LOGO, ENJOY WITH ABSOLUT RESPONSIBILITY AND ABSOLUT BOTTLE DESIGN ARE TRADEMARKS OR REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OWNED BY V&S VIN & SPRIT AB. ©2004 V&S VIN & SPRIT AB. IMPORTED BY ABSOLUT SPIRITS CO., NEW YORK, N.Y.
ARTWORK BY KENJI HIRATA. PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE BRONSTEIN. ENJOY WITH ABSOLUT RESPONSIBILITY™.

www.absolut.com